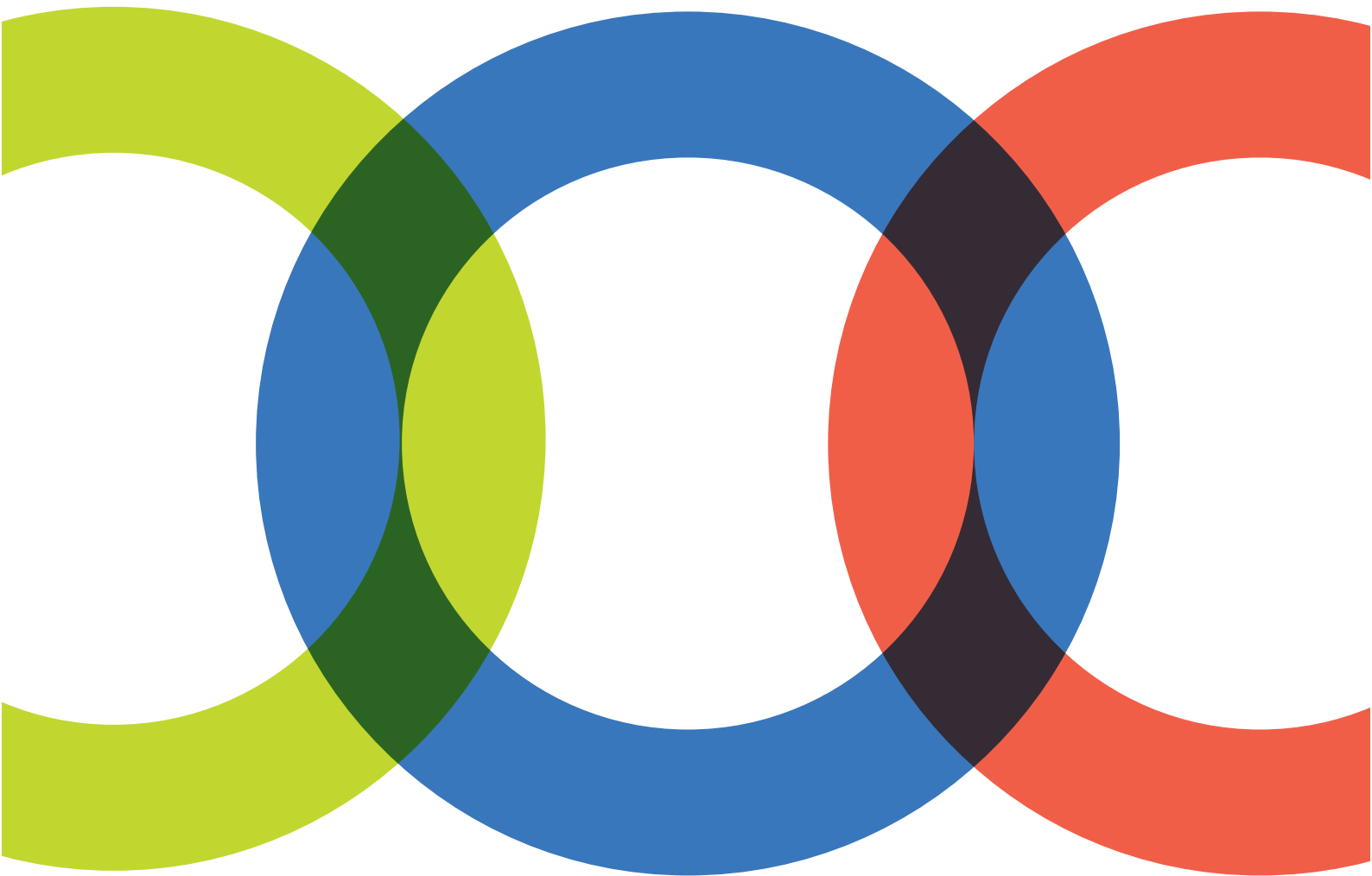


# Discovering the Temperaments



**oasis**

School of Human Relations



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## Acknowledgments

This manual draws together the insights and understanding that Bryce Taylor and Nick Ellerby gained over a number of years about the temperaments and their origins, the ways in which they can be valuable in personal development and their value as a tool in helping others.

*Discovering the Temperaments* aims to bring together in one place a variety of thoughts, writings and influences that a reader might find helpful in furthering their own understanding and insight. However, it is no substitute for the learning available through observation and interaction with others in discovering the temperaments and the way in which they colour our lives.

The authors, individually and together, have drawn on their many years' experience of working with others in a wide variety of arenas with many people, and their deep involvement in all aspects of human relations work; through organisational development work, in one-to-one relationships and in facilitating courses and workshops. A knowledge and understanding of the temperaments has proved an invaluable tool in the quest to come to know more and more of how people operate, the most effective way to enable people to reach their desired outcomes and how to understand their responses and reactions.

As Nick said when he first put his thoughts on the temperaments into writing:

"During 1991 whilst I was co-facilitating a two-year Oasis programme 'The Practice of Counselling and the Management of Change', I had the experience of spending two days with Mario van Boeschoten. The focus of the two days was an exploration of the temperaments as they operate in adult life. I was affected from the start by the resonance the descriptions and orientations had with my own life. Since then I have found the temperaments to hold continuing fascination and interest. I have had a number of opportunities to lead others through workshops examining how the temperaments might add to a person's understanding of themselves and others and how such understanding can promote development within and between people in both life and work."

Special thanks go to Mario van Boeschoten who has been an inspiration and constant source of new learning and who has willingly spent time talking through the concept and application of the temperaments, and from whom much of the content for this document was gained.



## Introduction

### Ways of Typing People

Throughout the ages there has been a long standing interest in finding ways to understand people as belonging to certain types, yet the use of types is relative. They provide general descriptions at the expense of individual detail and one of the complaints frequently heard when a person is given a profile is that it isn't that accurate.

Types, however, do provide useful frameworks and an overview that can locate some important distinctions. The four temperaments are amongst the oldest of ways of typing people. Jung devised his own, influenced to some extent by them, and the four learning styles also outlined here have overlaps with Jung's way of thinking. Perhaps this is an indication that there are some fairly stable differences between people that translate into the way they appear, the way they act and the way they prefer to learn.

Introducing people to 'typing' is to help give a useful language that separates out some important aspects of human responding. They don't have to be taken too seriously to be useful. And a type is a type – not an individual who may well have 'bits' of more than one type in their make-up as well as displaying different aspects of different types in different situations. They therefore need to be used with a good deal of allowance for the full humanity of the person to show through, rather than as an excuse for not noticing how rich a person each one of us is.





## Chapter 1: The Temperaments, the Elements and the Trials

**Temperament:** ...in psychology, an aspect of personality concerned with emotional dispositions and reactions and their speed and intensity; the term often is used to refer to the prevailing mood or mood pattern of a person.  
*Encyclopaedia Britannica*

Galen, the Greek physician of the 2nd century AD, developed the Temperaments from an earlier physiological theory of four basic body fluids (humours): blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile. The ancient Greeks considered the health of mankind to be similar to their concepts of cosmology and did not relate these directly to anatomical concepts. The Temperaments were used as a basic typology, a way of characterising people before modern methods were devised and before psychological explanations were strongly featured as a way of talking about people.

The Temperaments provided a primary way of thinking about people that was much in use during the Middle Ages and even in Shakespeare's time, when they were referred to as 'the four humours'. In those times, man was seen as a microcosm of the universe whose behaviour was determined by his physiology which was, in turn, subject to planetary and, to a lesser extent, terrestrial influences.

In medieval times it was thought that each of us was also linked primarily to one of the four elements: earth, air, fire, or water. Our temperament had a dominant element to it that gave a cast of character to what we did; a kind of signature that we put on all we attempted. The four temperaments are:

- The Choleric
- The Sanguine
- The Phlegmatic
- The Melancholic.

Each of the four temperaments was in turn related to the four seasons, the four elements and four animals whose nature was thought to exemplify the specific temperament:

- Choleric: summer, fire and the lion
- Sanguine: spring, air and the ape
- Phlegmatic: winter, water and the lamb
- Melancholic: autumn, earth and the pig.

More recent theories emphasise the influence of the endocrine glands on emotional reactivity. Modern psychology attributes primary importance to the activity of the automatic nervous system, particularly its sympathetic branch, in emotional reactivity: autonomic over-responsiveness is intimately linked with neurotic dispositions. Because such responses can

be conditioned, individual differences in ease of conditioning (also probably innate) also play a part in determining temperament.

### **The Elements**

For over 4,000 years the material world was considered to be composed of four basic elements: Earth, Water, Air and Fire. There was also thought to be a fifth invisible element, which permeated all space, known as the Prima Materia (or Aether), which was considered to be the foundation substance of the other elements. The entire material world, including the health of Mankind was considered to evolve around the balance of the first four material elements of earth, water, air and fire. Aether was considered to represent the realm of invisible and spiritual forces in Man and the universe, and was generally disregarded when dealing with health on a physical level.

Each of the four elements was considered to have two qualities and each quality shared two elements:

- Fire: warm and dry
- Air: warm and moist
- Water: cold and moist
- Earth: cold and dry.

Each quality and each element has a series of correspondences associated with them, providing a relationship to bodily structures, organs, function, symptoms, events and a large number of other medical and everyday occurrences. Examples of these correspondences are the four seasons described above. By considering the relationships between the correspondences, the natural interplay of forces can be observed, providing a system of diagnosis and healing that was simple, effective and holistic.

The physiological functions of the body were perceived as follows:

- Air is taken in with each breath and its vital part, called 'pneuma', enters into the blood and is circulated with it
- 'Thymos', a vital energy essential for life is derived from the pneuma
- Food and drinks are taken in by way of the mouth and are transformed in the liver into 'humours' or vital essences, which also circulate with the blood.

### **The Humours and Healing**

Initially the Greeks had three humours – blood, phlegm and bile – and their concepts had more than a passing resemblance to the tradition of Ayurvedic medicine. By Hippocrates' time, some changes in the traditions had taken place: the bile humour was expanded into two qualities, yellow bile and black bile, in order to provide a total of four qualities, which correspond to the four elements.

They were perceived to control the metabolism of the body, and thus health and life itself. When the humours were in balance, the body was healthy. An excess, deficiency or abnormality of one or more of these humours caused disease. Harmony of all parts is

essential for health. Disturbance of the humours may occur as a result of internal difficulties or be due to outside influences, such as abnormal climate, improper personal hygiene, poor diet, lack of or excessive activity, and unhealthy surroundings.

Hippocratic medicine considers three stages of disease:

1. A change in humoral proportions caused by external or internal influences and the reaction of the body to this by generating a fever or 'boiling' (coction).
2. The resultant crisis which caused the disorder to...
3. End through discharge of the excess humour – or by death.

These emanations or humours of the body may generally be observed during illness (blood, phlegm from the nose, vomit, abnormal faecal matter, urine and perspiration), and frequently an illness suddenly disappears after reaching a crisis – upon discharge of one of the humours.

**1. Sanguis:** provides motive energy of the body; stimulates the logical faculty. The receptacle for this humour is the veins and arteries.

**2. Phlegm:** has expelling properties; functioning to expel substances not required. It controls the Choleric humour; gives beneficial cooling and moistening effect on the heart. It also strengthens the function of the lower brain and the emotions, but is inimical to the intellect. It maintains proper fat metabolism and the balance of body fluids, electrolytes and hormones. The receptacle for the phlegm humour is the lungs.

**3. Choleric:** closely associated with the nervous system; acting to increase its rate of function. Choleric clarifies all humours, and has a warming effect on the body. It stimulates the intellect, increases physical and mental activity and courage. Its receptacle is the gall bladder.

**4. Melancholic:** consists of two parts

- a. A thick earthly aspect, the coldest part, prone to coagulation.
- b. A more fluid, vaporous substance, which has the ability to ascend and affect the brain and, if excessive, cause melancholy.

This vaporous substance is also known as Atrabile. In normal quantities, Melancholic stimulates memory and makes the nature homely, practical, pragmatic and studious. The coldest part is adherent and viscous and, if not eliminated properly, can settle on or in tissues, thus causing morbid deposits, which can form tumours. The spleen removes the Melancholic from the blood and body fluids, and is the receptacle of Melancholic.

### Our Temperament and our 'Self'

Our temperament is not to be confused with our 'selves': just as we are not our behaviour, so we are not our temperament. However, we cannot get away from our temperament any more than we can get away from our behaviour. Temperament illustrates something relatively basic and essential about our 'stance' to life, for example, a Phlegmatic is not going to become a Choleric in one lifetime, nor is a Melancholic going to develop any great sanguinity either.

Although you cannot change your temperament, you can change your relationship to it!

The temperament provides an underlying way of approaching what happens to us and how we view life. Once you know how your temperament works you can work with it and not fight it – something almost every temperament does. So, for example, we can strengthen certain qualities and reduce the influence of others but some aspects of our temperament are going to be qualities that we are better learning to live with rather than stubbornly trying to eliminate. Most people have a dominant temperament, a secondary one and traces of a third. The fourth is usually absent. Age helps us ‘harmonise’ our temperaments and we can also learn to achieve a greater harmony between the various temperaments and our own temperament.

The temperaments largely disappeared from use as the modern scientific world evolved, but even though we now rely almost entirely upon the idea of *personality* to understand a person, the influence of the temperaments can still be seen, for example in saying someone is ‘good humoured’ or in ‘bad humour’, an indication of the temperaments’ influence upon our language, if not our thought.

However, interest in the temperaments is reappearing. Even though they don’t claim the kind of accuracy of modern science, they do have a strong explanatory power. The temperaments are not to be thought of as psychological profiles – the characteristics go deeper than personality and include genetic predisposition.

“Even with the basic types known as the temperaments, such variety exists among people that the very mystery of existence seems to express itself within these types. Temperament, that fundamental colouring of the human personality, plays a role in all manifestations of individuality that are of concern to practical life.” Rudolf Steiner<sup>1</sup>

The work of Steiner in the early 1900s adds a further aspect to the temperaments and how they connect to four aspects of our self; each temperament having dominance in one area. This perspective brings a strongly spiritual dimension; seeing the temperament as the result of the forces of heredity and those the human being brings along as part of its own development for this incarnation.

This insight offers a view as to why the temperaments demonstrate themselves as they do.

- **Higher self:** individuality; fire; holds all together; capable of responding to and saying ‘no’ to both genetics and upbringing – **choleric**
- **Astral body:** inner life; awareness; consciousness; where we experience pain, emotions, feeling, values, thoughts, instincts, intentions – **sanguine**
- **Life forces** and the regulation of flows and processes: no consciousness; water – where the temperaments operate most strongly – **phlegmatic**
- **Physical body:** visible; earth – **melancholic**.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Four Temperaments* by Rudolf Steiner, from a lecture given in Berlin, 1909.

### A Link to Contemporary Ideas – Learning Styles

Another useful framework for looking at individuals and their different styles of learning has been developed by Honey and Mumford. The results from their questionnaires are plotted onto a framework with four major quadrants. The four main styles of learning are described as:

1. **Conceptualisers:** who like ideas and can work from theories; linked to the Choleric temperament.
2. **Activists/enthusiasts:** who work best when involved with others; linked to the Sanguine.
3. **Concrete thinkers/pragmatists:** who work with what's there and prefer doing to 'talking about it'; linked to the Phlegmatic.
4. **Reflectors/analysers:** who can see beyond the obvious, often think things through a great deal before acting, have a strong conscience; linked to the Melancholic.

### Life Challenges

Life is not easy, nor is it designed to be. There are challenges to be faced, difficulties to surmount and internal forces to bring under our influence and understanding (rather than control). In addition, there are the tasks of each life stage at which we succeed, more or less. Our character, temperament and personality all have to be integrated into some sort of working order if we are to function in the society surrounding us. All this we know, and yet there is a prevalent belief that life, in spite of all this, should somehow be easier than it is. Perhaps, given all this, it should be a good deal harder.

### The Four Elements and the Four Trials

The four elements give a sense of orientation to other aspects of life and each presides over a different part of human experience. The four elements are used here to illuminate briefly the temperaments and to indicate how the major trials of life can be linked to one of the four elements.

1. **Trial by earth:** this occurs when we are challenged to work out some new understanding or arrangement between our selves and our position in relation to our social world or social identity.

The challenge may come from having to move in order to take up a job when we are deeply attached to our roots. 'Roots' issues relate strongly to the earth element. It may be that we have to fight off the expectations of others about the adult identity we are expected to assume; to become a doctor or to follow in the family business, for example. Struggles to assert our will over laid-down expectations are typical of the trial by earth. And, of course, some people find they cannot make the break, or find the break itself so highly priced that they never succeed in recovering from it. They may leave their local area and take up the job, but some deep connection is gone and they never quite feel at home again.

2. **Trial by fire:** this is signalled when the old ideas no longer work and the usual explanations do not bring their expected comfort. Things no longer make sense in the way they have in the past. It is not so much that events cannot be explained or

no longer hold meaning, but our ideas about what meaning they do hold are no longer sufficient.

It may come slowly or suddenly, but the moment arrives when you know that you have to give up the familiar view of things and search for a new explanation. The 'burning' of old concepts and frameworks may take place in relation to a particular aspect of experience or may be much deeper. It may arise in a moment (when something so overwhelming happens that we know we will not be able to return to our old certainties) or it may take a prolonged period of hibernation before the full signs of the true extent of the crisis become manifest.

It may concentrate upon the nature of our understanding concerning a relationship, say, or over a deeply held view of some event or decision, or it may be an existential crisis, a loss of belief in anything. The effects of a serious trial by fire can be long-lasting and deeply difficult to work out, since once the foundations of belief have been shaken, it may well take a long time before an individual is prepared to put their trust in anything. It may lead to a deep pessimism, or nihilism.

**3. Trial by water:** distinguished by the theme of relationships. They slip away, or come under stress. Like the element of water itself, relationships themselves are fluid and unstable. People change; expectations are no longer met. We feel unsure of the love and trust of those close to us or we fail them. It can often arrive after a major change of another kind has taken place and then we look round, only to find all those people we once felt so sure of, well... 'Where are they now?' 'Where do they fit in?'

The trial by water may leave us feeling isolated and alone, no matter how many social contacts we have, because it is at a level of deeper connectedness that we are losing our bearings.

**4. Trial by air:** moments in life when it seems as if everything is hanging in suspension. It may be over one particular aspect of life, but we experience a moment of absolute uncertainty, when things could go one way or another. We know we have nothing to put against what is taking place. In some decisive way, we can only sit and wait; we are powerless to do more. When it takes place over our life itself, then we may experience one of those moments, which can last weeks or even months, when all things are held, poised to await a new surge of momentum or not. This is a time when the forces at work in our lives, once they break, may literally sweep us away.

### Identifying the Four Trials

It may be, even from this outline, that it is possible to recognise those episodes in life when you have been working with one of the four trials; one of those phases when the questions gathered around one area of your life and seemed to pursue you. It may be, too, that you have lived through one of those longer periods when one trial has succeeded another: as one episode left you vulnerable to experiences in another area.

Bereavement may be the beginning of a *trial by earth* – of facing the reality of the relationship as it was. It may mean coming to the painful realisation that in a substantial way the relationship was based upon such dependency that both parties were held back from becoming who they might be. From the expressed sadness and all too genuine grief at the

loss, there begins the more complex process of reassessment. This in turn leads to seeing other themes, links and connections that could not be observed whilst the person was living. From this devastating realisation may flow insights and greater understanding of both our own biography and that of the person who has died.

This may lead to a *trial by fire*, the feeling that the old reassuring belief systems simply cannot account for the new understandings rushing through our life. The feeling of losing all contact with our former sense of how life was ordered can be disturbing and frightening.

In turn, this may give way to a *trial by air*, as all the past is suddenly held in stasis and all possibilities are suspended. No direction makes any sense in view of the rewritten life story that is beginning to appear. And, finally, the person experiences a *trial by water* as they look around in wonder at who is there and who they need to remain with them from this landscape of the past, which seems ever more like a two-dimensional world.

This example, caricature though it is, will nevertheless not be foreign to all readers. More important though, is the searching through your own biography to identify which of the trials you have already undergone, some perhaps more than once, and which you may feel are to come, or which you are to escape this time around. For not everyone is condemned to suffer all the trials.





## Chapter 2: A Map of the Temperaments

There is no hierarchy between temperaments so the map is offered in the form of a circle. (There is a strong suggestion that whilst adjacent temperaments can combine, opposites cannot.)

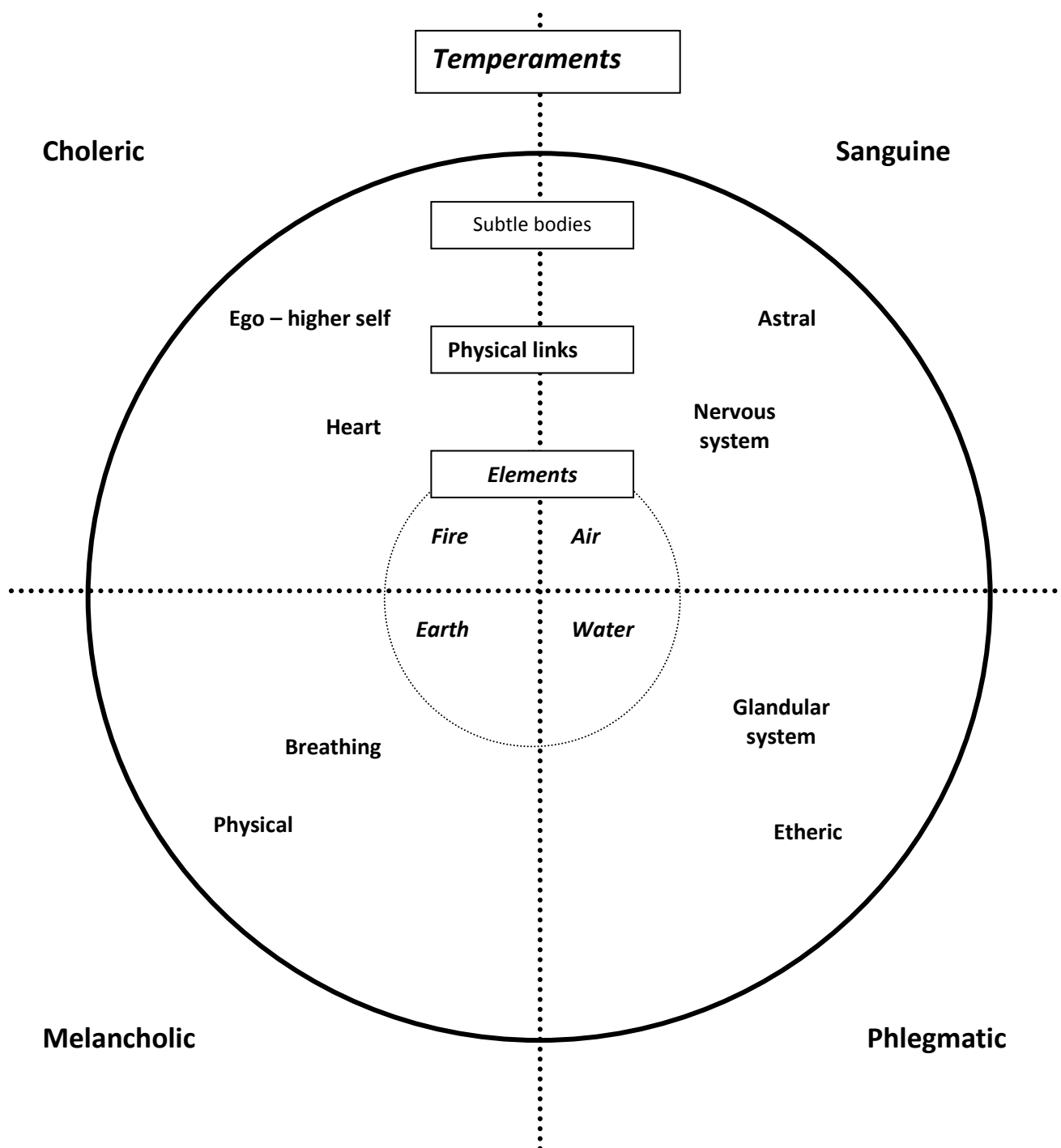


Figure 1: A Map of the Temperaments

## 1. Choleric (Fire)

**Choleric: strongly connected to the Ego forces.**

Choleric: passionate; irascible; angry.

Greek: cholera – chore; bile. *Chambers Dictionary*

**The main orientation of the Choleric is to action and the present.**

The Choleric is linked to the circulatory system and connects strongly to the ego, hence there is often an immediacy about a choleric person. There is often a strong relationship to and expression of power and Cholerics can call upon a strength of will and determination that makes them quite forceful. They are often strongly interested in achievement, however, their energy is not so well focused as with the Phlegmatic and there is often drama and a show to go with the action. The Choleric is often decisive (sometimes without sound evidence), opinionated and firm.

### **Choleric: Summary**

Linked to the circulatory system

Connects strongly to the ego

Immediacy; forceful

Strongly interested in achievement

Not as focused as the Phlegmatic

Deep and intense

They are as likely to intimidate as to inspire

Many of those venerated as the greatest saints were of either choleric or melancholic disposition. Not, of course, because those of any particular temperament are pre-disposed towards sanctity (such is not the human condition), but because their depth and intensity made them more likely to have the militant (in the best sense) approach that makes for the founders, heroes, and zealots. Naturally, this proverbial two-edged sword also gives those with these temperaments the potential for a lengthy drop if they should fall.

Cholerics do not much like sloppiness and messiness in organisational affairs – though they might well be a great cause of it themselves (and when they are they always have a good reason to excuse themselves). Cholerics view themselves as great organisers and, though they do get things done, it is often with a good deal of chaos.

Cholerics are likely to be what we term ‘achievers’, however, this does not apply only in the limited sense of ‘success’ that is common in this century. It represents a more holistic understanding of ‘success’ and may include living a life dedicated to alternative values to those expressed in the dominant culture. The Choleric is capable of committing to a path and not deviating from its direction.

Trust in divine providence is critical for the Choleric and, as with the Melancholic, difficult to develop. They also can find that they are as likely to intimidate others as to inspire them. The Choleric’s puzzlement at others’ lack of depth can grow to disgust, and, too often, they, who are most likely to champion the causes from which others will benefit, can find themselves quite alone.

If a Choleric ‘goes awry’ it will be from bitterness and anger, though their principles generally remain unshaken. They are apt to lose patience with those who lack their depth, and to judge as ‘lukewarm’ the adaptable (and often peripheral) possessors of other temperamental inclinations. Any bitterness would be born of seeing manoeuvring and manipulation that, as it were, answers to no higher authority.

The choleric individual has a strong sense of their own individuality and often acts with a firm sense of their own power. They are at home making judgements and pointing out what needs to be done; Cholerics don't find the exercise of authority particularly difficult. They may not make an overt bid for it but they will be happy to oblige and often think that it is a sign that others have recognised their value and importance!

Cholerics are not particularly social in their orientation but they can get on with people enough – enough to do what they are there to do. They like projects and initiatives, starting things and leading the troops. They have more staying power than the Sanguine and usually inspire people to stay with them even through tough times. Cholerics do not like letting people down, and they find it hurtful that setting things up often involves a loss of illusions for all concerned when things do not work out. Consequently, a lot of time is spent managing potential conflicts.

Since Cholerics have such a strong public side to them they rarely experience a dose of their own medicine. Their link to power and authority often protects them from the feedback and opinions they so easily 'dish out' to others – whether invited or not. But when they are on the receiving end, their sensitivity and ability to be injured is often a surprise to everyone, including themselves. Cholerics know they aim to do well and do not like any of their many shortcomings being made apparent. However, they like fawning and being played up to even less – which causes some difficulties for those around them.

'Giving in' or 'giving up' is not something a Choleric likes to do so it has to be put diplomatically – then there is the risk of being told you are pussyfooting around them and not giving an honest appraisal of things. You can't get it right for getting it wrong with the Choleric in full flight. Just as they can get very agitated by the shortcomings of others and have no hesitation in telling them, their ire soon passes – though it leaves the wounded in its trail if they are not careful. Cholerics are linked to fire and passion and this can come and go very quickly – so they can get worked up about nothing or it can be a deep current that shows great steadiness. Cholerics may well say they can feel their 'blood boil'. Their warmth, however, does make them potentially attractive as managers and leaders.

They lack human sentiment and sympathy, yet this, in a way, is a great advantage to them. Effeminate, sentimental dispositions are repugnant to them; they hate the caresses and sentimentality which arise between intimate friends. False sympathy cannot influence them to neglect their duties or abandon their principles; on the other hand, this lack of sympathy has great disadvantages. The Choleric can be extremely hard, heartless, even cruel in regard to the sufferings of others. They can cold-bloodedly trample upon the welfare of others, if they cannot otherwise reach their goal. Choleric superiors should examine their conscience daily, to discover whether they have shown a lack of sympathy toward their colleagues and friends, especially if these are sickly, less talented, fatigued, or elderly.

Cholerics are not particularly consistent – though they would hotly deny it. They do not mind making decisions and changing them if they do not suit the situation. In this way they can be adaptable to some things – what needs doing in a project or business venture. In personal matters, however, they are often stubborn, especially if their *amour propre* is involved. This gives them something of an erratic quality when under stress. They can come over as managing very well – because that's what they say – but actually it is all a lot of 'hot air' and inside they may be struggling.

### Basic Orientation of the Choleric

The Choleric can be seen as noble and heroic. In their aspiration for great things the Choleric is supported by:

1. **A keen intellect:** they are people of reason while their imagination and emotions are poor and stunted.
2. **A strong will:** they are not frightened by difficulties. The Choleric does not know despondency.
3. **Strong passion:** the Choleric is very passionate. All dictators, however benign, old and new, are proof of this statement.
4. **An impulse to dominate others and make them subservient:** the choleric is made to rule. They feel happy when they are in a position to command, to draw others to them and to organise large groups.
5. **Unnecessary haste:** the Choleric is immediately and totally absorbed by the aim they have in mind and rushes for their goal with speed and on impulse. They little consider if they can really reach their goal.
6. **Stubbornness:** they see only one road and do not notice that by another road they could reach their goal more easily but, instead, they continue with great obstinacy on the original course. In this way, they deprive themselves of their best successes, even though they will not admit that they, themselves, are the main cause of their failures.

### Light Side of the Choleric

1. **May do great things:** if they develop their faculties and use them for good and noble purposes.
2. **May become a real wonder in the eyes of others:** the Choleric who is able to manage their temperament embraces meditation, because by their strong will they can banish distractions and concentrate their attention upon one point.
3. **Patient and firm in endurance of physical pains:** the indication of a developed Choleric.
4. **Can practise abstinence** and suffers less from temptation of the flesh because they have a hard, rather than a soft, heart.
5. **Very successful in their professional work:** being of an active temperament, they feel a continual inclination to activity and occupation. Choleric teachers have something potent about themselves and do not allow affairs to get beyond their control.
6. **Can keep a secret like a grave.**

### Shadow Side of the Choleric

1. **Pride:** shows itself in the following instances:

- a. The Choleric is *full of themselves*: they consider even their defects, their pride, obstinacy, anger, as being justified, if not as something great and worthy of praise.
- b. The Choleric is very *stubborn and opinionated*: they think they are always right, want to have the last word, tolerate no contradiction, and are never willing to give in.
- c. The Choleric has a *great deal of self-confidence*: they can rely too much upon their own knowledge and ability. They believe that they are more capable than others and are sure to succeed without the help of others.
- d. The Choleric can at times *dislike colleagues*: others are seen as uncommitted, weak, unskilled, and slow, when compared with themselves. They show their contempt by despising, mocking and making belittling remarks.
- e. The Choleric is *domineering and inordinately ambitious*: they want to hold the first place, to be admired by others, to subject others to themselves.
- f. The Choleric *feels deeply hurt when they are humiliated or put to shame*: even the recollection of past 'failures' fills them with great displeasure because it gives them a lower opinion of themselves.

**2. Anger:** the Choleric is vehemently excited by contradiction, resistance, and personal offences. Things are made even worse by the fact that the Choleric, in their angry impetuosity, makes false and exaggerated reproaches and may go so far in their passion as to misconstrue the intentions and to pervert the words of those who irritated them, thus blaming, with the sharpest of expressions, faults which in reality were not committed at all. By such injustice they can offend and alienate even their best friends.

Their anger easily degenerates into hatred; grievous offences are not forgotten. In their anger and pride they are drawn to actions which they know will be very detrimental to themselves and to others such as ruin of health, work, fortune, loss of position, and complete rupture with intimate friends.

By reason of their pride and anger, they may totally ignore and cast aside the very plans for which they have worked for years.

**3. Deceit, disguise and hypocrisy:** the tendency to pride and self-will may lead them to the lowest of vices, deceit and hypocrisy. They use hypocrisy, deception, and even outright lies, if they realise that they cannot carry out their plans by force.

**4. Lack of sympathy:** the Choleric, as said above, is a person of reason. They have two heads but no heart.

### Self Help for the Choleric

1. A Choleric **needs high ideals and great thoughts**: they must draw them from inspiration sources, as the comments of ordinary folk may well pass the Choleric by, and also from the experience of their own life.
2. The Choleric will make still greater progress if they can **work as a peer** with others, and even at times seek guidance from others.

3. The Choleric can benefit from remembering: “I will never seek simply for myself, but on the contrary I will consider myself a **tool for change in the service of others.**”
4. The Choleric must **combat their pride and anger continually**: humility is their only helpful response.

### Working with the Choleric

The Choleric is a **natural leader and organiser**, however they can, if they do not control the weak side of their temperament, act as dynamite in private and public and cause great disturbance. The Choleric seems to benefit from a **high level of rigour** so that they can apply their good talents to the best advantage.

Cholerics who are less talented or not sufficiently educated **can make very many mistakes**. They are likely to make life bitter for those around them, because they insist stubbornly upon the fulfilment of their orders. Such Cholerics often act according to the motto: *Sic volo, sic jubeo; stat pro ratione voluntas*, Thus I want it, thus I command it; my will is sufficient reason.

The Choleric who learns that **others can be of assistance** benefits greatly. A key challenge for the Choleric is being able to develop a sense of compassion; however, this can only occur when they are able to accept others as having value. Even a very proud choleric can easily be influenced to good by reasonable suggestions and a sense of deeper motives.

It is important **not to be carried away by anger** nor give expression to the determination to ‘break’ the obstinacy of the choleric person. It is absolutely necessary to remain calm and to allow the Choleric to ‘cool off’ and then to revisit the issue from an attitude of needing the involvement of the Choleric. In this revisiting it is important to call to high ideas; appeal to their good will, their sense of honour, their distaste for the vulgar.

### Characteristics: Physical

- Quick and strong: emanates a sense of power
- Compact body; short hands, short necks, expressive eyes but highly focused
- Blood circulation is vigorous and under stress goes red in the face
- Outward looking – looking for what needs to be done
- Walks on heels rather than toes.

### Characteristics: Expression

- First impression is power and drama; Cholerics draw attention to themselves
- There is none of the energy saving of the Phlegmatic
- Cholerics are action-orientated, very busy; they gain their experience from ‘doing’; they are achievement-oriented rather than ‘being’
- They think they are good organisers but there will usually be some flamboyant chaos
- They will often think they are delegating to others rather than telling them what to do; they enjoy telling others what needs to be done, but they will also give help – usually on their terms
- It can be possible initially to confuse Cholerics with Phlegmatics, but they often come up with ‘and what’s wrong is...’
- They are never cold, always warm
- They can be relied upon to maintain their commitment
- If asked for support they will give it; they feel they don’t need support themselves

- They are great at recognising the weaknesses of others, but not their own
- If they can acquire the quality of respect, they can be strong, powerful and positive in regard to others
- Their enthusiasm is focused and they are not very in touch with their inner life
- They can be quick to anger: they are often immediate and powerful – explosive and without regrets; it is noticeable through the eyes which drill into the person – burning outwardly (Sanguines can be very affected by this display)
- Their power can be attractive to others, because their strength keeps on going
- Tend to say 'No' when what they mean is 'Stop!'
- They hold strong judgements about what is right and wrong, and about the conduct of other people
- They can feel warmth and compassion but find it hard to give respect
- Many find their way into management even though their personal organisation may be messy; they tend to be effective
- They are willing to make quick decisions to which they are committed – the commitment makes it difficult for them to change their minds if their self-image is at stake
- They are not good at taking feedback, so it can be advisable to provide escape routes.

## 2. Sanguine (Air)

### **Sanguine: aware of soul body.**

Sanguine: of blood, of the complexion or temperament in which blood was supposed to pre-dominate over the other humours, hence ardent, confident and inclined to hopefulness.

Latin: sings – blood. *Chambers Dictionary*

**Sanguines are distinguished by an outgoing disposition; they are interested in both what is outside and how what is outside is interested in them.**

The Sanguine is connected to the emotional (or astral) body and some believe that the sanguine temperament is the most common. Sanguines like attention and seek it; this makes them easy-going in social encounters – at least in the beginning – and they can put people at ease. They are prized for their extroverted and seemingly ‘happy-go-lucky’ approach but their lack of depth can be a weakness in relation to their inner life. They may well be accused of being ‘flighty’ and unpredictable as well as unreliable, but they are usually welcome wherever they go for the good cheer they bring with them. They have a mobility and lightness that is both attractive and irritating. The life and soul of the party is often a Sanguine.

They experience hot, strong emotions that arise suddenly and move quickly. When they lose their temper it is like a ‘straw-fire’; it rises, burns and falls quickly, and they are sorry. Although they are responsive to feelings and generally sensitive, they do not ruminate for long over things or regret much. They want to put the ‘past behind them’ and ‘get on’. Even if the Sanguine is occasionally exasperated and sad, they soon find their balance again and their sadness gives way quickly to happiness. This sunny quality of the developed Sanguine helps them to find community life much easier and to overcome the difficulties of such life more readily than do Choleric or Melancholics. Sanguines can get along well with those people that others generally find difficult to work with.

Since they do not remain preoccupied with their feelings for long, they are open to accusations of selfishness and superficiality. Such feelings can lead to distortions in relationships, which can be a source of difficulty for a temperament that is as strongly dependent upon other people for praise, attention, recognition and approval as the Sanguine (something most Phlegmatics assume they have in enough measure).

This makes them strongly socially-oriented and often they can get things underway that are proving more awkward than the other temperaments can manage. Interestingly, these apparent free spirits often are most obedient in practice because fitting in as part of a group is most important to them. Their desire for obedience may be a cloak for an unwillingness to

### **Sanguine: Summary**

- They like attention and seek it
- Easy-going in social encounters
- Extroverted
- May be accused of being ‘flighty’, unpredictable and unreliable
- Hot strong emotions arise suddenly and move quickly
- Dependent upon other people for praise, attention, recognition and approval
- Do not remain preoccupied with their feelings
- Likely to be faithful to any state of life they embrace



accept responsibility and perhaps it is as well that such responsibility is not in the hands of those who cannot see the impact of their decisions.

They are likely to be faithful to any state of life they embrace, and, whether in married life or the monastery, they are likely to have a pleasant home atmosphere and a delight in the simple things of life that can be very positive for others. If they lack the depth and drive that some other temperaments possess, they are nonetheless spared the tumult and pain that is its invariable companion.

Sanguines do not always find it easy to give criticism, they much prefer spreading around good cheer, so they tend not to offer criticism well. Their remarks can often be piercing in intent rather than weighty. They may tell you they don't like the colour of your shirt – hoping that this will be more acceptable than telling you what they really think, which might be, 'You should wear something else'. Such efforts at sparing people's feelings rarely work. The Sanguine doesn't want to upset others and so often dodges being critical. They much prefer being able to put things 'right' and generally 'smooth things over'.

Nonetheless, they remain blind to the effect their actions or decisions may have on others. Being peripheral in their relationships, they are seldom the ones who can offer strength and support to others – they are seen by other temperaments as unreliable, not through callousness, but because of their lack of depth. It would be a sanguine sort who would be puzzled by how others could revolt at injustice – and their response well may be something like 'but the rest of us had to do it, too'. On the positive side, those of sanguine temperament can have a simple, childlike faith that appeals to those they serve, where the profound approach of others can cause uneasiness. With guidance from others with deeper roots, they can develop greatly, keeping in mind that when left alone they can be 'like the wind'.

Their orientation to time is to the immediate present and the future rather than long time spans. They are concerned with what is going on *now* and also what is coming. They go in for numerous projects but may not complete many. They are always whole-heartedly behind any enthusiasm as long as it lasts and don't like to be reminded that they have shown the same degree of commitment to something very different not long ago. Sanguines are excused a lot and this makes some other temperaments resent them for their 'charmed' life.

### Basic Orientation of the Sanguine

- 1. Lightness of touch:** they love light work which attracts attention, where there is no need for deep thought or great effort. It is hard to convince a sanguine person that they are superficial, on the contrary, they imagine that they have grasped the subject wholly and perfectly.
- 2. Consistently inconsistent:** they love variety in everything; resembling a bee which flies from flower to flower or the child who soon tires of the new toy. A Sanguine will go shopping and buy a variety of clothes on impulse, creating a rationale later for what they have bought.
- 3. Tendency to the external:** Sanguines do not like to delve into their inner life, but direct their attention to the external, as shown in the keen interest which the Sanguine pays to their own appearance, as well as to that of others. In the Sanguine the five senses are especially active.

**4. Optimism:** they are optimistic, overlook difficulties, and are always sure of success. If they fail, they do not worry about it too long but console themselves easily.

**5. Vivacious:** their vivacity explains their inclination to poke fun at others, to tease them and to play tricks on them. They take it for granted that others are willing to take such things in good humour and are very much surprised if they are vexed on account of their mockery or 'near the knuckle' stories.

**6. Absence of deep passions:** the passions of the Sanguine are quickly excited, but they do not make a deep and lasting impression.

### The Light Side of the Sanguine Temperament

The Sanguine has many qualities which endear them to their friends, acquaintances (of which the Sanguine will have many called 'friends') and colleagues, and which also win the affection of those in authority. The Sanguine is:

**1. Extrovert:** very communicative, loquacious, and associates easily with strangers.

**2. Friendly** in speech and behaviour and can pleasantly entertain friends with interesting stories and adventures.

**3. Pleasant and willing** to oblige.

**4. Compassionate** whenever a mishap befalls a neighbour and is always ready to cheer them up by a friendly remark.

**5. Able to draw the attention of others to their faults without causing immediate and great displeasure.**

**6. Bears no grudge.**

**7. Pliable and docile:** the virtue of obedience, which is generally considered difficult, is easy for them.

**8. Candid** and can easily make known their difficulties.

**9. Not defiant or obstinate:** when punished they hardly ever show resentment; they are not defiant and obstinate. It is easy for a boss to deal with sanguine staff, yet they are prone to flatter the boss and show a compliant attitude, thus quite unintentionally endangering the peace of a working community.

### The Shadow Side and Challenges of the Sanguine

**1. Self-absorption and self-complacency:** pride manifests itself by a strong inclination to vanity and self-complacency. By praise and flattery, a sanguine person can easily be seduced to perform the most imprudent acts and even highly risky activities.

**2. Inclination to flirtation, jealousy and envy:** however, their love has a lightness to it and changes easily. They can be easily tempted and in their eagerness to please others they can find themselves in complicated situations.

**3. Cheerfulness and love of pleasure:** the Sanguine does not like to be alone; they love company and amusement; they want to enjoy life. In their amusements, such a person can be very flamboyant.

**4. Dread of principles** which require strenuous efforts: everything which requires the denial of the gratification of the senses is very hard on the Sanguine.

**5. Decisions are likely to be flawed:** because their inquiry into things is only superficial and, because of feelings of sympathy or antipathy, they are inclined to partiality.

**6. Undertakings fail easily:** they always take success for granted and therefore do not give sufficient attention to possible obstacles.

### Self-help for the Sanguine

**1. Reflecting on their inner life** as much as engaging in the outer world: if superficiality is the misfortune, reflection engenders the development of the Sanguine.

**2. Consider every point:** anticipate all possible difficulties; it is wise to remember they are tempted to be over-optimistic.

**3. Seek good counsel and mentoring:** since they can be easily influenced, it can be of real benefit; a practical aid against distraction is a life that embraces some degree of rhythm.

**4. Strengthen the traits of compassion, honesty, cheerfulness.**

### Working with a Sanguine

Work-based support for those displaying a strong degree of sanguinity is comparatively easy:

- They must be looked after: monitoring helps
- They need encouragement to complete assignments
- Their assertions, resolutions and promises must not be taken too seriously
- They benefit from establishing review opportunities as to how they are progressing.

Sanguines can be charming and it is important to be aware that this charm can lead to preferences being shown. It must be remembered that a person with a sanguine temperament is unlikely to keep to themselves what they are told or what they notice about anyone. It is advisable to think twice before taking a sanguine person into confidence.

### Characteristics – Physical

- They are light and quick: walks on toes rather than heels, springy step; they have an upright bearing
- They see the world from their head; noticeable in the way they look around
- They often give the impression they are younger than they are.

### Characteristics – Expression

- Lightness of touch: deft, mobile
- In touch with inner life: the emotional or astral dominates
- Extrovert rather than introvert
- Thinking tends to be associative rather than logical – not good theorists
- They like the good things in life and often have good taste; they care about their appearance, look good and can be vain; they may be free spenders and are often quite generous
- They are often good actors but can also be shy and even wooden: their need for approval can make their initial performance wooden; this initial freezing decreases when they know the other is interested
- Imaginative: well in touch with own feelings and able to express them
- Need constant confirmation: a need to be recognised
- To the surprise of others, they are often unclear about their own identity; they are often soul-based
- Other temperaments see their own inner world through their own eyes; the Sanguine seeks confirmation of their own existence – truly, in the Sanguine the eyes are the windows to the soul
- They are good observers: they look around and take in things relevant to their concerns
- They are willing to make quick decisions based on what they would call ‘intuition’: they can offer strong ‘expression’ but will often change their mind
- They picture how they hope things will work out positively and then can quickly change their mind and rationalise that it was the best thing to do, as a result, others wonder about their reliability
- They like variation of sensations and varied environments
- They are very good in a fast changing situation, as they will be in touch with what is happening
- They can fall in and out of love without any great effort and be very sincere at the time
- Seek approval: leads to inward identity problems; their sense of identity therefore comes from what others say
- Anger is immediate, light and they then feel ‘sorry’; they have a great fear of disapproval
- There is so much out there for them to take in, they often have difficulty in concentrating and sticking to one thing
- Flexible to situations and able to respond to many different situations in one day and therefore wonder, ‘Where was I in all that?’
- Tend to say ‘No’ as ‘Yes’.

### 3. Phlegmatic (Water)

**Phlegmatic: in touch with life forces.**

Phlegmatic: cold and sluggish, not easily excited.

Phlegm: flame, inflammation, phlegm (regarded as produced by heat), also same word in Latin. *Chambers Dictionary*

**Phlegmatics are energy conserving; offering quiet responses and working with the forces of life.**

This temperament is strongly linked to the glandular system and inner processes. The Phlegmatic has a degree of detachment that makes for great minds, but does not foster warm relationships. They are unlikely to offend others, and equally unlikely to fall into the trap of judging, but this leaves others with a sense of indifference. Where the sanguine role is largely relationship-based, with active involvement with others, the Phlegmatic is the translator, writer, scientist.

Those of phlegmatic temperament are likely to be stabilising forces in any group situation. They will have a sense of duty and responsibility that will be a strong influence on their actions and decisions. Different though they are from the Sanguine, they, too, need positive

influences from the authority figures or groups with which they associate themselves. Where the Sanguine is a conformist for the sake of acceptance, the equally obedient Phlegmatic will be so from a sense of obligation and respect for tradition and the status quo. This can be a problem if the idea of custom, tradition, and so on is false, because they will not question those in authority (true or usurped).

**Phlegmatic: Summary**

- Has a degree of detachment
- A stabilising force
- Obedient from a sense of obligation, respect for tradition and the status quo
- Make good, long-lasting friendships
- Steady, reliable and persistent
- Food and drink, relaxing and taking it easy are important
- Sense of inner well-being
- Attention is firmly directed inwards
- When feelings build up there is an explosion

They make good, long-lasting friendships and stand by their choices and decisions. This dependability makes them admired by some of the other temperaments, though they are sometimes seen as a little boring and unadventurous. They like to get 'into the flow' and can usually accomplish much by their steady,

reliable and persistent efforts. They are not so concerned with the good opinion of others (especially if other people are getting in the way of their 'work') but are sociable and enjoy the comforts of life.

Food and drink, relaxing and taking the time to take it easy are all important to the Phlegmatic. They do not like to be 'rushed' or to have to work to anyone else's timetable. They can be very quiet listeners, so much so they can go to sleep when they go so far inside! This reflects the sense of inner well-being that can accompany a person influenced by this temperament. The phlegmatic person is only lightly or not at all touched by impressions; they let outer events that happen around them run their course, hence eventual impressions fade away very quickly. Their attention is firmly directed inwards.

When telling a story they tell the *entire* story, in *all* the detail... slowly. For someone who is of another temperament they could be sometimes described as boring. It is important not to confuse this with a view that nothing is really going on under the surface. On the contrary, slow waters can run very deep.

They often make good administrators since they do not get 'caught out' like Sanguines can, or make a drama out of a crisis as the Choleric is prone to. Routine, rhythm and good order suits them and this tends to show itself in high levels of self-organisation. They are often good at setting up systems, methods, order, planning. They are often quiet and careful in their contributions, leaving some people thinking of them as manipulators, because in meetings, for instance, they are quiet, then make a remark, the timing of which is perfect, (thus saving energy). Others are suspicious of how planned and calculating the Phlegmatic is and think the action was to meet the person's own ends – it may have been but it doesn't have to be.

It takes a lot to 'shift' a Phlegmatic out of their routine or pattern but once they have been coaxed into joining in some new activity they can get fully involved. Their lack of interest in the novel and the new may mean they miss opportunities that a Sanguine would have capitalised on long ago. Initiating new ventures is not something that most Phlegmatics welcome. However once it is underway they are there pulling their weight and more.

Phlegmatics can be long suffering in their tolerance, though when feelings build up there is an explosion: the opposite of the Choleric's fire. It is then like trying to stop a train. Things arise out of the etheric realm (the source of vital energy) and when they appear they have a much deeper manifestation. Such anger leaves them feeling upset for a long time and if they are justified (usually they are), it can be difficult to heal because of the long build-up.

The angry Phlegmatic is not a pretty sight and it is often not well directed or clearly expressed, but the level of angry disappointment cannot be ignored. The reaction of the other is often one of, 'Where did that come from?' Because it goes against their internal rhythms, Phlegmatics would do almost anything than get so much into their feelings and lose their temper.

### Basic Orientation of the Phlegmatic

- 1. Very little interest in whatever goes on about them.**
- 2. Work is unlikely to be at the centre of their universe**, unless it embraces a comfortable and leisurely atmosphere, interwoven with good food.
- 3. Everything proceeds and develops slowly.**

### Light Side of the Phlegmatic

- 1. Make strong relationships:** the relationship isn't instantaneous as with the sanguine, but is built over time.
- 2. Perseveres:** is especially good with routine and/or more detailed work.
- 3. Not easily irritated or frustrated by failures, criticisms or hardships.**
- 4. Has no deep passions:** does not demand much of life.

**5. Able to be alone:** comfortable with their own company.

### Shadow Side of the Phlegmatic

- 1. Inclined to leisure,** eating and drinking.
- 2. Prone to be lazy:** neglects responsibilities.
- 3. Lacks ambition:** does not aspire to lofty things; this can lead to an 'inferiority complex'.
- 4. 'Not being bothered'** is a common perception of the Phlegmatic.
- 5. Their rhythm can become so embedded it becomes a rut** that can be a real struggle to get out of without help. This temperament can be portrayed as the basis for so-called 'addictive' behaviours.

### Working with the Phlegmatic

Diligent and consistent workers, they make very reliable colleagues. They are best left to their own devices and allowed to get on with things in their own way. If they have plenty of refreshment breaks and a good lunch hour they will be very content to undertake the most routine and monotonous tasks in a well-ordered and sustained way.

It can be a thankless activity if you attempt to push/force/bully or advise a Phlegmatic in a particular direction. A Phlegmatic needs to grasp the benefits for them of any new course of action before they are willing to give energy to anything new or different.

### Characteristics: Physical

- Usually feel the cold acutely: heat is drawn inward and exterior is cold
- Sluggish, easily becoming overweight; also called the 'Lymphatic' temperament
- Roundness in appearance: not heavy but much slower than the Sanguine
- Energy saving
- They feel good in their body and enjoy life's pleasures – food and so on – savouring, not hurrying
- Inner direction: eyes show very little
- Healthy appearance: good skin: healthiest temperament
- Light in movements: rhythmic
- Less facial expression.

### Characteristics: Expression

- Good organisers: they are good at finding their way through systems and creating systems in an energy saving way
- Great creators of lists
- Quietly listening: they may go so far inside that they are in danger of going to sleep
- Not easy to get into strong emotions: difficult to get in touch with them; they often offer a flat response
- Slow to anger: usually a prolonged build up then *bang* followed by a coldness/cut-off
- They make good counsellors (if they can stay awake!) and they are peaceful and easy to be with if they can open themselves
- They have great staying power and are not easily ruffled unless things disturb their personal rhythm
- Tend to say 'No' as 'Yield'

- They like life to keep on an even pitch
- They show a good deal of self-control (save energy)
- They are not unfriendly, though they are not automatically warm/spontaneous
- They are often effective in meetings: they do not bang the table to make a point (that would be to waste energy) but they rely upon their good sense of timing
- They are not quick decision-makers, but well prepared
- Things must be convenient
- They are dependable and reliable: they offer a strong sense of loyalty, which makes them steady in relationships
- They are less involved with the 'soul life' but are really interested in the enjoyment of life, including routine
- They are less concerned with their own identity and what it is.



## 4. Melancholic (Earth)

### **Melancholic: aware of the physical body.**

Melancholic: dejected, mournful (obsolete: temperament resulting from excess of black bile). *Chambers Dictionary*

**Melancholics look deeply into things, themselves, others and the situation, and tend to be people who deepen all matters they are asked to consider.**

Melancholics are identified by their link to the skeletal system, being fine boned and sharp featured. They live strongly in their bodies and are often very in touch with every nuance of their own aches and pains. Living in the body, being earth bound, is something with which Melancholics often struggle to find a satisfactory orientation and one way of thinking of it is that the Melancholic is waging a battle between spirit and matter in themselves. The archetype for the Melancholic would be best typified by Eeyore from *Winnie the Pooh*. Schubert, in his *Psychology*, says of the melancholic nature:

“It has been the prevailing mental disposition of the most sublime poets, artists, of the most profound thinkers, the greatest inventors, legislators, and especially of those spiritual giants who at their time made known to their nations the entrance to a higher and blissful world of the Divine, to which they themselves were carried by an insatiable longing.”

Looking deeply into things makes them slow to come to a view but very unsparing in what they see. Deeply perceptive, they are often self-critical and they will discount their own accomplishments. By looking deeply into themselves they are in touch with their inner movement and motives. As a result, they recognise that motives are never pure. They are also good at seeing the mix of motivations in others.

The Melancholic has been described as the temperament that longs for heaven, with life on this earth always a disappointment. The depth and dedication of the Melancholic will meet or exceed that of the Choleric, but the natural caution and slowness to embrace new courses of action can leave the Melancholic with a sense of having no way to channel profound ideals.

Contrary to what may appear at first glance, the Melancholic actually has little use for rules, because they see, soon enough, that they have little basis in concern for others in many cases. The structure they have in their own lives is a means to the greater end that they seek.

There aren't many melancholic managers – however their presence can be valuable because they will act as an 'anchor' and stop things moving on too quickly. They often have a strong (and sometimes over-developed) sense of responsibility. They are great observers and are often good at research, into small or large matters, since they are painstaking and very scrupulous about the results. They will do their homework about anything – the shopping list or the business plan.

### **Melancholic: Summary**

- Live strongly in their bodies
- Waging a battle between spirit and matter in themselves
- Deeply perceptive; can be hard on self as well as others.
- Has little use for rules
- Strong (sometimes over-developed) sense of responsibility
- Painstaking and very scrupulous; no decision can be taken lightly
- Can lack tolerance for misdeeds
- Often at home in their own company
- Find peculiar difficulties in challenging people

This seriousness means no decision can be taken lightly, whether it is buying a new washing-up bowl or a new car. Even then they can remain doubtful whether they have done the best thing; they feel they could always find a better deal elsewhere. Since deliberation is all, they do not like to be rushed and, although the other temperaments find all this effort frustrating, it won't budge the Melancholic.

They are usually orderly in their affairs and do not like not knowing where things are. This does not necessarily mean they are tidy in appearance of things, only that they can find anything they need. This attention to detail makes them impatient with the sloppiness (as they see it) of other temperaments. Their sharp humour and penetrating wit often makes the point that their equally accurate evidence would not; Melancholics can make great clowns because they see the absurdity in the tragedy and the tragedy in the absurdity.

In personal life, this trait of close observation means they often see things they do not like. It is then stored and may come out later. Their observations about other people are often deeply penetrating and very perceptive, which often prepares them to take up the role of 'conscience', pointing out shortcomings and failures in sometimes righteous and judgemental ways. They can lack tolerance for misdeeds and can become fixated on the 'rights' and 'wrongs' of events. They have a tendency never to be satisfied, which can make friendship with a deep Melancholic something of a trial.

The Melancholic will not understand an approach to human interaction that is either superficial or expedient. They will naturally assume that all human behaviour is based on their own valuing of certain core concepts and it may take years for a Melancholic to develop any sort of closeness with those they meet, but, once done, they will be your most devoted friend or your worst enemy, and either will be 'forever'. Once harmed personally, exposed to a sense of betrayal or injustice or even seeing that, for example, those in authority have personal gain rather than the welfare of those they manage as their goals, disillusionment will be strong and usually unshaken. They have long memories and, because of their acute sense of their own shortcomings, do not let even small oversights go by unrecorded or unannounced. They are past-orientated; they are at home in history and memory.

They are also often at home in their own company and enjoy getting to the bottom of things. In meetings they are often asking a question from three items before because they are not yet satisfied that enough has been said on the matter. Their contributions can be overlooked at the time because they do not seek a decisive role, and even have an anxiety about becoming over-exposed by being given such a role. As a result, they will make comments that are not taken up until someone else echoes them later and then people pay attention. For some Melancholics this arouses their sense of injustice but for others it is recognition that they are smarter than most and an indication that it takes a while for some to catch up. Since they do not need much in the way of praise, they are usually pleased to see their good idea has at last found a groundswell of support.

Their strong sense of justice and high moral standards sometimes mean they are oppressed by their own sense of low esteem and guilt. It can make them conscience-ridden. Their moods are deep and often not welcomed even by themselves; the tendency is to withdraw and be taken over by mood (rather than feeling). Mood casts its atmosphere over things.

Since Melancholics see into the heart of things and can spot what is motivating a person often before the person himself or herself, this gives them something of a wary quality in their dealings with people. Others, who do not like being 'seen' so readily, often return this sense of wariness. Sanguines find this particularly disturbing since the Melancholic is not taken in with the 'show' put on by the Sanguines and finds it unconvincing. As a result of these kinds of attributes, Melancholics are gifted when it comes to weighing matters of conscience and will stay with a difficult decision long past it being good for them. But getting it 'right' and in a proper balance is the Melancholics work. They are deeply reliable in their judgment and if they should get it 'wrong', after all the consideration they give to things, it hangs heavily upon them.

Melancholics find peculiar difficulties in challenging people. They feel obliged to challenge injustice or disorder but, at the same time, they have very little skill or courage in making challenges. They deliberate for a long time on how to express the challenge; but when they are about to make it, the words fail them, or they go about it so carefully, so tenderly and reluctantly that it can hardly be called a challenge. If they try to master this timidity, they easily fall into the opposite fault of shouting their challenge excitedly, angrily, in unsuited or scolding words, so the effect is, once again, lost. This difficulty is the besetting cross of melancholic superiors. They are unable to discuss things with others; therefore they swallow their grief and permit many disorders to creep in, although their conscience recognises the duty to interfere.

### Nature of the Melancholic

The Melancholic is only mildly excited by whatever acts upon them. The reaction is minimal, but this often imperceptible impression remains for a long time and by subsequent similar impressions grows stronger and at last excites the mind so powerfully that it is difficult to erase it.

Such an impression may be compared to a post, which by repeated strokes is driven deeper and deeper into the ground, so that at last it is hardly possible to pull it out again. This propensity of the Melancholic needs special attention since it serves as a key to solve the many riddles in their behaviour.

### Basic Orientation of the Melancholic

- 1. Inclination to reflection:** the thoughts of the Melancholic are far reaching. The Melancholic is easily given to brooding and day-dreaming.
- 2. Love of retirement:** the Melancholic does not feel at home among a crowd for any length of time; they love silence and solitude.
- 3. Serious conception of life:** at their core there is always a certain sadness, 'a weeping of the heart', not because the Melancholic is sick or morbid, but because they are permeated with a strong longing for an ultimate good and feel continually hampered by earthly affairs.
- 4. Inclination to inactivity:** the Melancholic is a passive temperament; it is difficult to move them to quick action.
- 5. A reserved nature:** they find it difficult to form new acquaintances and speak little among strangers. They reveal their inmost thoughts reluctantly and only to those whom they trust and, when they do so, they go about it so awkwardly that they do

not feel satisfied and find no rest. Such experiences tend to make the Melancholic more reserved.

### The Light Side of the Melancholic

1. Melancholics practice **inner contemplation** with ease and joy: meditating on the perishable things of this world, they are attracted to spiritual realms.
2. Melancholics are often **great benefactors** to their colleagues: they can guide, are good counsellors in difficulties, and are reasonable, trustworthy, and well-meaning bosses. They are willing to make great sacrifices for their neighbour and are strong and unshakable in the battle for ideals.

### The Shadow and Challenges of the Melancholic

1. **Difficulty in decision-making:** on account of too many considerations, fear of difficulties and of the possibility that their plans may fail, the melancholic can hardly reach a decision. They are inclined to defer their decision. Melancholics are people of missed opportunities. While they see that others have crossed the creek long ago, they still deliberate whether they should and if they can jump over it.
2. **Timidity:** if they are called upon to begin a new role, to carry out an unpleasant task, to venture on a new undertaking, they have a strong will coupled with talent and power, but no courage. Therefore the proverb is: 'Throw the Melancholic into the water and he will learn to swim.'
3. **Excessive deliberation:** may be the reason why the Melancholic often stutters, leaves their sentences incomplete, uses wrong phrases, or searches for the right expression.
4. **Melancholics are loathe to appear in public and to be praised:** they allow others to be preferred, even if they are less capable, but at the same time they feel slighted because they are being ignored and their talents are not appreciated.
5. **Distress of mind:** Melancholics can fall into terrible distress because in the depth of their hearts they are filled with a longing desire for the ideal, and the consequences of not living up to it. This condition can easily assume the proportion of despair and they can become a real burden to friends and colleagues.
6. They are exasperated and **provoked by disorder or injustice:** the cause of the exasperation is often justifiable, but rarely to the degree felt.
7. They are **very suspicious:** they rarely trust people and are always afraid that others have a grudge against them.

### Self Help for the Melancholic

Inviting them to come out of themselves, whilst not always met with a warm response initially, is a helpful way for the Melancholic to give of themselves in their unique way, but they usually need to feel safe and at home with the company.

Confidence and compassion are the two pillars on which they will rest so firmly that they will not succumb to the most severe trials arising from this temperament. They need to remind

themselves, 'It may not be as bad as I imagine. I may be seeing things too darkly,' or, 'I am being more pessimistic than is helpful to the situation.'

Find opportunities to cultivate the good side of the temperament and especially their inclination to an inner life and their compassion for the circumstances of colleagues and friends.

### Working with the Melancholic

In working with the melancholic temperament special attention must be given to the following points:

1. It is necessary to **have an understanding** of the Melancholic: in their presentation they offer many riddles to those who do not understand the challenges of the melancholic temperament.
2. It is necessary to **gain the confidence** of the melancholic person: this is not at all easy and can be done only by giving them a good example in everything and by manifesting an unselfish and sincere love for them.
3. One must **always encourage them**: rudeness, harsh treatment, hardness of heart will cast them down and paralyse their efforts.
4. It is a good idea for the Melancholic to be busy, but **not overburdened** with work.
5. Melancholics take everything to heart and are very sensitive: it is necessary, therefore, to **watch for mental health problems**.

### Characteristics: Physical

- The skeleton is the most earthly part of the person.
- Melancholics have a boniness in facial structure and a structure that is quite visible in the hands, etc
- Sadness around the eyes: the Melancholic knows of sadness; eyes inward-oriented; 'periscopic' orientation
- Deeply inward (more so than the Phlegmatic) but does not feel happy within their own body; a sense of burden, a weight on their shoulders
- Heavy footsteps – carrying burdens of world
- Their bodies feel the need of warmth as they feel cold; they often have sensitive skins.

### Characteristics: Expression

- Tendency to be real humorists as they are in touch with their own darkness
- Their sense of timing in serious matters is usually very poor but what they have to say is worth listening to
- They are good thinkers: the brain is a significant part of their body
- They have an eye for detail – possibly too much detail; they are effective completers, however it could take a while
- They are good at research work and working in vertical systems
- Their decision-making is slow and difficult, due to the periscopic view of the world around them, so they are never quite sure what's going on
- They live deeply, rather like in a submarine; Melancholics are deeply insecure in this area

- Anger does not come out and there is a danger of it being turned into bitterness towards the self
- Tend to say 'No' as 'Poor me' – the opposite of Sanguine
- The element of perfectionism makes decision-making difficult
- They frequently worry about money: spending money is difficult; they are careful, always saving for rainy days
- The immature Melancholic has a sense of self-pity and will talk themselves down; in maturity, their tendency to self-pity can transform into a deep sense of compassion
- They are in touch with the inner realm of motives, acknowledging that these are never pure; they work from a knowledge that every light side has its dark side
- They can be quite perceptive: they 'pick up' if something is not right, and then, probably with awkward timing, say so
- They have a strong sense of humour: they make good clowns because of the contrast and their abiding awareness of human folly
- They often dress in contrasting colours, such as black/red
- The opposite of Sanguine.



## Chapter 3: How the Temperaments View Each Other

The Choleric views:		
<b>Sanguines</b>	Negative	Unreliable, over-sensitive, changeable.
	Positive	Fun, quick decision-maker, colourful.
<b>Phlegmatics</b>	Negative	Controlling, but cannot see how they do it. They go on too long.
	Positive	Good organisers. Can be quiet when I cannot.
<b>Melancholics</b>	Negative	Stop the flow, always one pace behind, indecisive.
	Positive	Deep thinker, good at detail.

The Sanguine views:		
<b>Cholerics</b>	Negative	Bully, judgmental, little self-knowledge.
	Positive	Gets things done, warmth and energy.
<b>Phlegmatics</b>	Negative	Boring, too slow, difficult to read.
	Positive	Reliable, peaceful, good friend.
<b>Melancholics</b>	Negative	Nitpickers, paranoid, bad communicators.
	Positive	Thorough, conscientious, sense of humour.

The Phlegmatic views:		
<b>Cholerics</b>	Negative	Bull in a china shop. They invade my space. Are not really well organised.
	Positive	Sound, clear decision-makers and they stick to them.
<b>Sanguines</b>	Negative	Will o' the wisp, unfaithful.
	Positive	Imaginative, good ideas, fun to be with.
<b>Melancholics</b>	Negative	Why question my motives? 'The deep one.'
	Positive	Will work things out for me.



The Melancholic views:		
<b>Cholerics</b>	Negative	Too much drama. Make me feel small.
	Positive	Warm, straight, knows where he is going.
<b>Sanguines</b>	Negative	All over the place, impossible to work with. Vain.
	Positive	Cheerful, moves things on, cheers me up.
<b>Phlegmatics</b>	Negative	Manipulative, 'steady push'.
	Positive	Systematic thinking. 'Good, he doesn't rush me.'

**Table 1: How the Temperaments view each other**

## Chapter 4: The Temperaments and Feedback

Each temperament operates differently when giving and receiving feedback. The following sections highlight the characteristics of each temperament together with their needs within those dimensions.

### 1. Choleric

#### Giving:

- Give feedback strongly and judgementally
- Are sure they have it right
- Usually very honest but not always with respect
- Expect instant action to correct it
- Wants to find out where the individual stands.

#### Needs to learn:

- To generate a sense of respect for the other
- Tact
- To pause and check how the other person feels
- Be able to admit they got it wrong.

#### Receiving:

- Usually takes it badly and personally (which usually surprises others because Cholerics are so good at giving feedback)
- Likes to confront or turn it back on the giver; 'No, it's your fault'
- May deny it at the time and come back the next day agreeing the action.

#### Needs:

- Emphasis on future action
- Openings that allow them to take account of special circumstances
- To be provided with escape routes
- Very clear statements with concrete examples.

### 2. Sanguines

#### Giving:

- Very good at observations
- Can come out quite quickly
- As a result can be heard sharply
- Tends to only half give observations before they start apologising
- Can move to interpretations which are less reliable.

#### Needs to learn:

- To be aware that whilst given with a smile their comments can still be taken as sharp
- To hold back from interpretations
- To offer feedback without needing approval
- That it is unnecessary to apologise for observations.

#### Receiving:

- They are not too protected by ego so can be hit hard by feedback.
- Can feel very vulnerable.

- Clever in rationalising why they did something
- Tend to explain their original intentions which have been misjudged.

**Needs:**

- To be brought back to what actually happened
- Warmth and clarity.

### 3. Phlegmatics

**Giving:**

- Not a strong need to give feedback
- Happens when something has gone on for a while
- Often understated, so is missed and has to be repeated
- Can be strong when they have to repeat it
- Timing is usually good.

**Needs to learn:**

- To get the point across clearly
- To be clear and verify that they have been heard
- To look out more and pick points up earlier.

**Receiving:**

- May not hear it the first time, because they are too absorbed in their own processes
- Find it difficult to act upon it immediately
- Find it easier to receive about the past.

**Needs:**

- Warmth and a process on which to work for the future e.g. a contract, a role model
- Giver to be sure that the moment is right i.e. does not upset the process or routine.

### 4. Melancholics

**Giving:**

- They don't very often
- When they do, it comes out of great depth and concern for the other
- Nearly always about motives: What is underneath?
- Ask uncomfortable questions about conscience
- Usually give mental pictures, thoughts.

**Needs to learn:**

- To develop compassion
- To get timing right. Is this the right moment?
- How to give feedback objectively without hurting someone.

**Receiving:**

- Feedback goes very deeply
- Takes a long time to sink in: there is a time lag
- Usually confirms their worst picture of themselves
- May strongly agree and think that it is worse than is being stated
- Agreeing strongly with critical feedback may be a way of reducing its impact

- Difficult to find useful ways to give them feedback that will raise their interest in change.

**Needs:**

- Warmth, loyalty and encouragement
- Help to see where in the past they got stuck
- To come back to the situation several times
- To find out what is there to give them structure and support for the future.



## Chapter 5: Working with the Temperaments

Remaining inwardly upright is the challenge within each of the temperaments.

### How we see the Temperaments

As we have seen, our temperament is illustrated to a degree in many aspects of our lives, including:

- **Physical structure:** our way of walking and how we carry ourselves, our build, skin tone and complexion
- **Life processes/systems:** our orientation to time, food and life processes
- **Organisation:** how we arrange our personal space, our inner world, our social calendar, our work routines.

However, they are more than a set of routines and habits. The way we relate to these things is also a part of our deeper nature, because our temperament is illustrated by how we do what we do – often illustrated by a chance remark, a certain way of responding to situations and to what we notice ‘naturally’. It is in these less than conscious patterns that our temperamental traits reveal themselves – usually to others rather more evidently than to ourselves.

It is not that each of us can be simply represented as no more than one stereotypical temperament. Of course we are more complex than that; we are a blend and combination of elements of each. However, as we have seen, we have a predominant aspect and a subsidiary aspect that tend to overshadow the other two. If you take stock and pause, you will readily know people you have met who correspond to these four major types and others who are a much subtler combination of elements.

### Understanding One's Own Temperament

The development of an intimacy with our temperament is an important feature in gaining maturity as we progress through our life. The study of the four temperaments itself is therefore a worthwhile area of personal exploration, since it helps reveal such things as whom we are likely to work well with and which temperaments we are likely to find ourselves at odds with.

Recognising fully one's own temperament can bring a significant understanding to moods, peculiarities, behaviour patterns and personal biography. If I know my own temperament I can work out my own questions and development needs with a stronger sense of assurance because, finally, the whole effort toward self-development consists in embracing and working with both the light and shadow aspects of myself. Thus:

- The Choleric will have to conquer, in the first place, their obstinacy, their anger, their pride
- The Melancholic, their lack of courage and their dread of suffering
- The Sanguine, their talkativeness, their inconsistency
- The Phlegmatic, their apathy, their lack of energy.

The person who knows themselves can become more in touch with their humanity, realising that many good traits which are considered to be virtues are merely good dispositions and the natural result of their temperament, rather than acquired virtues.

Consequently:

- The Choleric will be more humble about their strong will, their energy and their fearlessness
- The Sanguine will be more humble about their cheerfulness and their facility to get along well with difficult people
- The Melancholic will be more humble about their sympathy for others, about their love for solitude and meditation
- The Phlegmatic will be more humble about their good nature and their repose of mind.

The temperament is innate in each person, therefore it cannot be exchanged for another temperament but we can cultivate our temperament and begin a deeper relationship to it.

### Temperaments as an Aid in Helping

A writer on temperament, David Keirsey (1998), explains:

“Suppose it is so that people differ in temperament and that therefore their behaviour is just as inborn as their body build. Thence we do violence to others when we assume that differences are flaws and afflictions. In this misunderstanding of others we also diminish our ability to predict what they will do... but **first you must study yourself**. If you do not have yourself accurately portrayed, no way can you portray anyone else accurately...”

As helpers or practitioners involved in human relations, we may risk forgetting that people are different from one another in a fundamental way. We may perceive others only from our own temperament type or ‘world view’. We may also need to be reminded that those differences are neither good nor bad... they simply are.

The temperaments affect not only what people attend to in any given situation, but also how they draw conclusions about what they perceive, so understanding the temperamental influences on a person and ourselves is a potent development tool. It is unhelpful to type a person as a ‘temperament’ but rather to see what temperamental influences are being demonstrated.

During the last 50 years we have seen attempts to categorise an individual as one type or another, through batteries of tests and so on. This tends to build a view of a ‘static’ individual, unable to change. In the context of this document we see a person being able to use their understanding of their temperament as an important part of the process by which we each reach our individual potential. Appendix 3 offers a comparative chart of other ‘typologies’ and how they derive from the temperaments, however, it is the subtle relationship between the temperaments, our own life experiences, each other and our ability to learn and change that brings the real interest and dynamics of this work to life.

The greatest error, today, is to believe that those of one temperament should seek to develop the characteristics of another. The true challenge is to accept the beauty of one’s own nature. And, of course, if the awareness of temperament keeps those of one temperament from total irritation with those of another, that, too, has its uses!

It may be difficult in many cases to decide upon the temperament of any particular person yet it is important not to be discouraged in the attempt to understand our own temperament and that of those we live with or come into contact with, for the advantages

of such insight are considerable. Recognising the temperaments of others helps us to understand them better, respond to them more effectively and be more tolerant.

- A choleric person is won by quiet explanation of reasons and motives; whereas they will become embittered, hardened and driven to strong-headed resistance by harsh commands
- A melancholic person is made suspicious and reticent by a rude word or an unfriendly response; however, they are responsive, trusting and affectionate through continuous kind treatment
- The choleric person can be relied upon, but with a sanguine person we can hardly count even upon their apparently serious promises.

With an understanding of the temperaments we can each develop more effective relationships. If I know that the behaviours of others are, in part, a consequence of their temperament, I do not become so affected and am able to respond more readily and will not so easily be excited or angered. I can remain quieter, for instance, even if a Choleric is severe, sharp-edged, impetuous, or obstinate. And if a melancholic person is slow, hesitating, undecided or they do not speak much and say awkwardly the little they have to say; if a sanguine person is very talkative, light-minded and frivolous; if a Phlegmatic cannot be aroused from his usual indifference; I may not become so irritated.

### The Temperaments and Conflict

A person's temperament can become potent in conflict situations as it represents a deeply embedded pattern of behaviours and reactions. An understanding of this is important for working with others or in coming to understand more of one's own temperament. The following outlines how the characteristics of the temperaments refer to conflict reactions.

**1. Choleric:** they can get emotional out of a sense of righteous indignation and anger, and can be highly judgmental and impetuous. They can be rude and domineering. They prefer hot conflict. Their preference is to attempt to force people to adopt their way of thinking, take the lead in deciding what needs to be done, and to refuse to recognise opposition.

**2. Sanguine:** Sanguines probably interpret a cold conflict in the worst possible light. The lack of direct evidence that something is going on, but the overwhelming feeling that bad things are happening and being done to them, could turn a Sanguine paranoid. All the latent fears, insecurities and hypersensitivities of the Sanguine are irritated by a cold conflict. Their preferred way of dealing with conflict is to bring others round to their way of thinking in whatever ways they can, and behave expediently as they see fit at the time.

**3. Phlegmatic:** if Phlegmatics are in a conflict they don't like, they can become resolutely unmotivated. They can procrastinate, be selfish, self-centred and over-protected. They react badly to the noise, upset and confrontation associated with hot conflict. They will prefer the more measured, cautious, insidious, tactical, political and protective style of cold conflict – even if the effects are negative. They seek to persuade others to accept their way of thinking as the correct one, a viewpoint to be seriously considered and accepted.

**4. Melancholic:** Melancholics can be overwhelmed by negativity. Their sensitive nature allows them to see the implications and consequences of a cold conflict



clearly. Hot conflicts are unlikely to fit in with the deeper, more considered approach to life that Melancholics thrive on. They will seek to gain legitimacy for their point of view and for their ways of thinking in a conflict by example, and try to gain recognition and respect for their way of doing things.

## Chapter 6: Diagnosing the Temperaments

### Introduction

When determining a person's temperament, the manifestation of intermediate forms or combinations of two or more temperaments is the rule rather than the exception. In order to determine one's own temperament, it is not wise to study the light or shadow sides of each temperament and to apply them to oneself; one should first and foremost attempt to answer the types of questions mentioned below.

As we have already seen, the temperament is a fundamental disposition of the soul, which manifests itself whenever an impression is made upon the mind, be that impression caused by thought – by thinking about something or by representation through the imagination – or by external stimuli.

### Helpful Questions

Knowledge of the temperament of any person supplies the answer to the questions:

- How does this person manage themselves?
- How do they feel moved to action whenever something impresses them strongly?

For instance how do they react:

1. When they are in a dangerous situation?
2. When they are praised or criticised?
3. When they are offended?
4. When they feel sympathy for or aversion to somebody?

The following situations and questions can all be used as part of a process for diagnosing one's temperament.

**1. Imminent danger:** how do they act if in a storm, or in a dark forest, or on a dark night when they feel in imminent danger? On such occasions one may ask the following questions:

- Is the person under the influence of such impressions, thoughts, or facts, quickly and vehemently excited, or only slowly and superficially?
- Does the person under such influences feel inclined to act at once, quickly, in order to oppose the impression; or do they feel more inclined to remain calm and to wait?
- Does the excitement of the person last for a long time or only for a moment?
- Does the impression continue, so that at the recollection of such impression the excitement is renewed?
- Or do they conquer such excitement speedily and easily, so that the remembrance of it does not produce a new excitement?

The replies to these questions direct us to the four temperaments and furnish the key for the understanding of the temperament of each individual.

The **choleric** person is quickly and vehemently excited by any impression made; they tend to react immediately, and the impression lasts a long time and easily induces new excitement.

The person of **sanguine** temperament, like the choleric, is quickly and strongly excited by the slightest impression, and tends to react immediately, but the impression does not last; it soon fades away.

The **phlegmatic** person is only slightly excited by any impression made upon them; he has scarcely any inclination to react, and the impression vanishes quickly.

The **melancholic** individual is at first only slightly excited by any impression received; a reaction does not set in at all or only after some time. But the impression remains deeply rooted, especially if new impressions of the same kind are repeated.

The choleric and sanguine temperaments are active; the melancholic and phlegmatic temperaments are passive. The Choleric and Sanguine show a strong tendency to action; the Melancholic and Phlegmatic, on the contrary, are inclined to slow movement.

The choleric and melancholic temperaments are of a passionate nature, they shake the very soul and act like an earthquake; the sanguine and phlegmatic are passionless temperaments, they do not lead to great and lasting mental excitement.

**2. Responses to being offended:** another very practical way to determine one's temperament consists of considering one's reactions to feeling offended by asking these questions:

- Can I forgive when offended?
- Do I bear grudges and resent insults?

**Cholerics and Melancholics** are those who would answer in any of the following ways:

- Usually I cannot forget insults, I brood over them
- To think of them excites me anew
- I can bear a grudge a long time: several days, even weeks if somebody has offended me
- I try to evade those who have offended me, refuse to speak to them, etc.

On the other hand, **Sanguines and Phlegmatics** would answer:

- I cannot be angry with anybody for a long time
- I do not harbour ill will
- I forget even actual insults very soon
- Sometimes I decide to show anger, but I cannot do so, at least not for a long time, at most an hour or two.

After having recognised that one is of the choleric or melancholic temperament, the following questions should be answered:

- Am I quickly excited at offences? Do I manifest my resentment by words or action? Do I feel inclined to oppose an insult immediately and retaliate?
- Or, do I remain calm outwardly in spite of internal excitement? Am I frightened by offences, disturbed, despondent, so that I do not find the right words or the courage for a reply and, therefore, remain silent? Does it happen repeatedly that I hardly feel the offence at the moment when I receive it, but a few hours later, or even the following day, feel it so much more keenly?

In the first case the person is **choleric**; in the second, **melancholic**.

Upon ascertaining that one's temperament is either sanguine or phlegmatic one must inquire further:

- Am I suddenly inflamed with anger at offences received? Do I feel inclined to flare up and to act rashly?
- Or, do I remain quiet? Indifferent? Am I not easily swayed by my feelings?

In the first case the person is **sanguine**; in the second, **phlegmatic**.

It is very important and, indeed, necessary to determine, first of all, one's basic temperament by answering these questions; to be able to refer to the various characteristics of the different temperaments to their proper source. Only then can self-knowledge be deepened to a full realisation of how far the various light and shadow sides of one's temperament are developed, and understand and know more of the modifications and variations one's predominant temperament may have undergone by mixing with another temperament.

### Behavioural Patterns

Behavioural patterns are a further useful tool in diagnosing someone's temperament. There are three major aspects:

**1. Eye expression:** a very valuable help for the discernment of the mixed, and especially of the pure, temperaments is the expression of the eye. The eye of the Choleric is resolute, firm, energetic and fiery; the eye of the Sanguine is cheerful, seeking, friendly and careless; the eye of the Melancholic looks more or less sad and troubled; the eye of the Phlegmatic is faint, devoid of expression.

The expression of the eye rather quickly reveals the choleric temperament and the temperament of the Melancholic. If from the expression of the eye neither the resoluteness and energy of the Choleric, nor the gloom of the Melancholic can be discerned, it is safe to conclude that a person is either sanguine or phlegmatic. After a little experience, one quite easily determines a person's observable temperamental characteristics, at the first meeting or even after a casual observation on the street.

**2. Physical movement:** the Choleric steps up firmly, resolutely, is more or less always in a hurry; the Sanguine is light-footed and quick, their walking is often like dancing; the gait of the Melancholic is slow and heavy and that of the Phlegmatic is lazy and sluggish.

**3. Physical attributes:** physical looks of the different temperaments, however, such as the shape of the head, complexion, colour of the hair, size of the neck, etc., are variously viewed as being inconclusive or a key factor; the latter being frequently found in popular writings. Rather than being a key, they offer further clues as to the dominant temperament but it would be rash to decide by physical looks alone.

#### Difficulties in Diagnosing Temperaments

- Early experiences that have suppressed a temperament or created a strong shadow element
- Individuals involved in self-development and who have chosen to work with their temperaments or, conversely, those not engaged with themselves or interested in developing themselves
- When a person is very nervous
- Mixed temperament: when a person has two equally potent temperaments working in their lives.

## Chapter 7: Thresholds and the 'Shadow'

### Thresholds

Part of our task in developing ourselves is to strengthen the ego or 'self'; this is not the little ego of need and desire but the self which is the vessel of the soul capacities we are fostering in the work we do throughout our lifetime. Thresholds are those experiences of challenge and risk where there are opportunities to take another step forward and reach a new place in our development. Thresholds come in many forms, not all dramatic and forceful; the challenge can be to find a way to yield and surrender to what needs to happen instead of always refusing and struggling. A threshold experience is something that is internally recognised rather than externally defined.

Threshold experiences are significant for two reasons: firstly, they represent opportunities to strengthen the self to meet future challenges; and secondly, they usually involve working with some aspect of our shadow. We often have to own some quality or contribution in crossing a threshold, which encourages us to increase our degree of personal responsibility for what our lives are becoming. Until we become aware, we cannot be responsible in any real sense, however much we are technically responsible. But *once aware we are always responsible*, from that moment on.

### Freedom and the 'Shadow'

"Freedom is the degree to which we have developed an intimacy with our shadow side."  
Mario van Boeschoten

At some point in our development we become aware of the existence of our 'shadow'; the hidden and repressed aspects of our nature, which we avoid, dislike, fear or wish to be rid of. It is part of who we are, but because it normally remains hidden, it can operate in our lives in ways that are outside our ability to influence. Through the mechanism of projection, of throwing our difficulties and our unpleasant aspects onto others, we only reinforce the belief that we do not have those bits in our selves.

For a time we may struggle on in the belief that those things we so dislike in others are not part of who we are, but this raises the question of how we can possibly recognise something if we have no aspect of it in our own make up. Such a realisation is often the beginning of becoming acquainted with our shadow and with the realisation that all those things we reject in others are reflections of the aspects of our own selves which we would rather disown.

Some aspects of the shadow are so shaming and guilt-producing that there seems no possibility that they could be redeemed. Yet if we can find the kind of relationship with another where we can confess those things we most fear about ourselves then the shadow can be reclaimed and the beginning of integration becomes possible. This difficult stage is often the beginning of a new and important phase of inner development.

It is in finding a relationship to each aspect of our darker side that we can begin to accept our shadow. We are all familiar with the way our body language can conflict with what we say; this is a characteristic means by which our shadow expresses itself, and one which is outside our direct control. If we can see enough of our shadow at work to give it a name and identify it, then, by quiet exploration, we may be able to seek its origin and find its original purpose: a purpose which all too often was linked to some positive intent.

When considering an action which was badly carried out it is always useful to look for the intentions which lay behind it, particularly when we are dealing with our shadow. We need to retain an inner position of detachment and compassion, rather than leap to premature judgement based on literal interpretations of what we find. The main ingredient required when working with our shadow is more than acceptance: it is love. If we can ask what lies behind the appearance and find an attentiveness where we can say, 'I want to become interested in you', then this is the beginning of transformation.

It is through learning to combine our lighter side – the positive persona – with the shadow, by bringing the two into relationship, that we are enabled to strengthen our day-to-day self. For some, their shadow is all the positive elements in their makeup and the claiming of any virtue is the hardest part of their journey towards integration and balance. The reconciliation of the light and the dark forces at work in us leads to a strengthening of the soul capacities. Remember:

"Recovery lies in the places we avoid." Arthur Miller.

### **Working with the Shadow**

#### **Questions to ask**

- What things do I avoid, and where?
- Which are the challenges it would be valuable to overcome?
- Are there people I seek out who reinforce my failings or who encourage me to remain where I am?
- Which parts of myself do I find most difficult to accept?
- Which aspects of myself would it be useful to develop so that I become more in contact with my shadow side?
- Where do I see my shadow at work in my life?
- What aspects in others do I find hardest to accept and how far does that indicate something in me that I cannot admit to?
- How do I excuse myself when I know I am failing despite my own best efforts?
- What habits and routines do I follow that save me from the effort of really deciding and taking full responsibility for what I do?

#### **Colour exercise**

Take the time to settle yourself and then do two colour exercises. The first, a colour exercise on the theme of the 'you' you present to the world – your persona. Then some time later follow this with another colour exercise on the theme of your shadow side – those aspects of 'you' you keep hidden from others. As before, do not think your way through this exercise; simply let yourself discover how your imagination represents these aspects of who you are on the paper.

Later, take time to do a third colour exercise which represents the integrated whole person that you have the potential to become and which you may sometimes even have touched in rare moments of completeness.

#### **Review**

Find someone with whom to explore:

- The process of each piece of work
- The results of each piece of work and what they suggest to you.

## Appendix 1: The Temperaments and the Elements

### Correspondences of the Elements

	<i><b>Fire</b></i>	<i><b>Air</b></i>	<i><b>Water</b></i>	<i><b>Earth</b></i>
<b>Tendency</b>	Rising	To and fro	Spreading	Contracting
<b>Quality</b>	Warm/dry	Warm/moist	Cold/moist	Cold/dry
<b>Direction</b>	South	East	North	West
<b>Dimension</b>	Duration	Upwards	Sideways	Distance
<b>Season</b>	Summer	Spring	Winter	Autumn
<b>Time</b>	Afternoon	Morning	Night	Evening
<b>Humour</b>	Yellow bile	Blood	Phlegm	Black bile
<b>Temperament</b>	Choleric	Sanguine	Phlegmatic	Melancholic
<b>Age</b>	Youth	Childhood	Maturity	Adulthood
<b>Body tissues</b>	Nerve tissue	Muscles, blood	Lymph, fluid, fat	Ligaments, skeleton
<b>Sense</b>	Smell	Taste	Sight	Hearing
<b>Flavour</b>	Bitter	Sweet	Salt	Hearing
<b>Body function</b>	Metabolism	Respiration	Nutrition	Form
<b>Faculty</b>	Attractive	Digestive	Propulsive	Retentive
<b>Excretion</b>	Metabolic heat	Expired air and gases	Urine, sweat	Faeces
<b>Emotion</b>	Excitement	Cheerfulness	Apathy	Depression
<b>Mental state</b>	Anger	Humour	Submission	Stubbornness

**Table 2: Correspondences of the Temperaments and the Elements**





## Appendix 2: Comparing ‘Typologies’

The Four Temperaments – Comparatives				
Hippocrates –370	Choleric	Sanguine	Phlegmatic	Melancholic
Personality Assessments				
True Colours	Green	Orange	Gold	Blue
William Moulton Marsden	Dominant	Influence	Steadiness	Compliance
DISC Profiling	Dominance	Influence	Steadiness	Conscientiousness
Merrill Reid Personality Styles	Driver	Expressive	Amiable	Analytic
LaHaye/Littayer	Powerful	Popular	Peaceful	Perfect
Smaller/Trent Animals	Lion	Otter	Golden Retriever	Beaver
Comparative Approaches				
	Fire	Air	Water	Earth
Plato –340	Philosopher	Artisan	Scientist	Guardian
Aristotle –325	Ethical	Hedonic	Dialectical	Proprietary
Steiner – 1904	Higher self	Astral self	Inner self	Physical self
Adickes 1907	Dogmatic	Innovative	Agnostic	Traditional
Spränger 1914	Religious	Aesthetic	Theoretical	Economic
Kretschmer 1920	Hyperaesthetic	Hypomanic	Anaesthetic	Depressive
Jung 1921	Sensation	Intuition	Thinking	Feeling
Honey and Mumford	Conceptualiser	Activist	Concrete thinker	Reflector Analyser
Fromm 1947	Hoarding	Exploiting	Marketing	Receptive
Myers 1955	Feelingful	Perceptive	Thoughtful	Judicious
Keirsey 1978	Apollonian	Dionysian	Promethean	Epimethean
Keirsey 1987	Idealists	Artisans	Rationals	Guardians



## Appendix 3: An Archetypal View of Development

### Planetary Groupings

When descriptions move into planetary characteristics, we are talking about archetypal ways of responding that have traditionally been linked to the different planetary forces; Mars, the god of war, for example. Mars has traditionally been associated with assertiveness, aggression and confrontation whereas Venus is linked to the feminine principle, to receptivity, soothing and listening qualities. One aspect of using archetypal identities is that they give a richer potential available to a particular stance. For example if an approach is said to be a 'Mars view' it gives a much more poetic dimension than simply describing it as 'confrontational'.

In psychological astrology, planets can be divided into three groups. These planets show what forces we can consciously direct or modify to some extent. They characterise the more obvious personality traits and strongest urges.

Planetary Groupings	
<b>1. Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus and Mars</b>	Basic personal factors
<b>2. Jupiter and Saturn</b>	Super conscious and sub-conscious
<b>3. Venus, Neptune, and Pluto</b>	Transcendent dimensions of experience

**Table 3: Planetary Groupings**

Individuality, strong identity and our ways of reacting spontaneously come from the Sun; our conditioned responses come from the Moon. The ability to reason and to exchange thoughts with others is a gift of Mercury and the need and capacity for love and close relationships relates to Venus. The drive towards action, self-assertion and sexual experience is from Mars; the deeper motivational and collective factors underlying these are symbolised by Jupiter. Saturn can be said to represent specific urges but also indicates deep states of being.

Experience of the super-conscious comes from Jupiter; the sub-conscious from Saturn. Together they make up the impact of how the individual participates in the world at large and in relation to social activities. They represent the deeper occurrences of stability, tradition and safety of Saturn, and the future aspirations of a sense of adventure, risk taking and personal growth from Jupiter.

A third group, Venus, Neptune, and Pluto, symbolises the profound sources of change in life; the transcendent dimensions of experience and the most subtle energies to which we are attuned. They relate to inspiration, insight and intuition; the urge to merge into a greater whole and the impulse for refining one's deepest nature. When these energies come into play, old patterns can be shaken up and changed quickly. These three planets refer to the transpersonal and the transformative energies within our lives.

### The Influence of the Elements

All that we see with the physical eyes is made up of one or more of the five elements i.e. earth, water, air, fire and ether, and all these five elements are inimical to each other. But with the help of, or due to, the soul, all the five elements are contained and active in the

human body; each one of us manifesting them according to our own karma – in proportion. All the five elements are active, in a greater or lesser degree, in every human body.

The elements can be correlated with the lower chakras; qualities which have to be overcome in order for spiritual progress to proceed. Air is associated with greed; water is associated with passion; fire with anger; and earth with attachment (this is similar to Joan Hodgson's work in *Wisdom in the Stars*<sup>2</sup>). Fiery people need to earn *love*; watery people *peace*; air people *brotherhood* and earthly people *service*.

The vital body is closely related to the physical body and is the same as the etheric double, the energy fields so commonly reported in the investigations of parapsychologists. Fire and air have often been considered as active and self expressive; water and earth considered passive and receptive and self repressive. This is similar to the *Yin* (water and earth) and *Yang* (air and fire) of Chinese thought.

Raynor Johnson associates the vitalising forces of the elements in the following way:

The Influence of the Elements		
<b>Water</b>	<b>Emotional or the astral body</b>	Consciousness dominated by intense yearnings, reactions and compelling desires.
<b>Air</b>	<b>Mental causal body</b>	Represents consciousness attuned to thought patterns of the universal mind.
<b>Earth</b>	<b>Physical body</b>	An attunement to the world of physical senses in material forms.
<b>Fire</b>	<b>Etheric or vital body</b>	Acts as a transformer of the air.

**Table 4: The Influence of the Elements**

Similar is the Greek concept of Apollonian fire and air which actively and consciously form life, and the Dionysian urge of water and earth which represent forces of a more unconscious and instinctive kind. Fire is often thought of as the dynamic core of psychic energy in Yang terminology.

**1. Fire people:** fire people equate experience as centred in personal identity. They are often self-centred and can be impersonal. They can feel themselves channels for life and they are often very proud of this fact. Fire people often have high spirits, great faith in themselves, enthusiasm, strength, and directness of approach.

They usually need a great deal of freedom in order to express themselves and ensure that they get the space that they want and recognition for their points of view. They can usually direct their will consciously, though not always consistently, and can be rather child-like in their simplicity which can be both endearing and offensive.

<sup>2</sup> Joan Hodgson, *Wisdom in the Stars*, White Eagle Publishing, 1943

Fire people have faults that are rarely about bad intentions but are often caused by lack of self control or sensitivity to others. They can come across as wilful or overpowering and rush into things without thinking through the effect they will have on others. Fire people feel that water will extinguish them and the earth will smother them and they often resent the heaviness and emotionalism that goes with those two signs.

**2. Air people:** air people on the other hand fan the flames by providing new ideas that the fire person can act on. Fire is often considered compatible with air for this reason. Air is the life energy associated with *prana*. It is the realm of archetypal ideas behind the physical world; the cosmic energy which actualises into specific patterns of thought. Some signs are concerned with willing something into being; air people focus their energy on specific ideas, which have not yet materialised and, by concentration, help them eventually materialise. They are often accused of being impractical dreamers, but they play their part in the creation at the broadest level because their ideas can eventually touch the lives of millions.

Theories and concepts lead air people to look for expression in art, words, abstract thought; they can detach themselves from immediate experience and reflect and be rational in much of what they do. Such detachment, whilst it enables them to work effectively with all sorts of people because they do not get involved with people at the emotional level, nevertheless leaves them open to accusations of not relating strongly to people. They often have difficulty with strong emotional commitment and even an acceptance of the physical limitations of life itself. Because thought is the dominating force in the lives of air signs, they are easily threatened if their opinions are ignored or the quality of their thought disparaged.

Water and earth people are the most likely to devalue air person ideas for they don't usually meet the emotional depth or the practicality that water and earth would like to see. At the same time, air people don't want to be confined by the limitations of the earth, or wish to have their freedom saturated by feelings and reservations of water signs. Although air people admire fire people in many ways they will nevertheless insist upon thinking things through before committing themselves; something which can annoy fire signs. Water, when strongly activated in their life, can often bring intangible factors into play which have a greater role in life than is commonly believed.

**3. Water people:** water people are in touch with their feelings, in tune with the nuances and subtleties that often go unnoticed in others. Water represents deep emotion and feeling responses, ranging from compulsive passions and overwhelming fears to an all-accepting love of creation. Water people can be aware of the apparently unconscious mind and are often themselves unconscious of much that motivates them. Water people revel in their feelings. Often, they are empathic with others without knowing quite why or how and when they are not fully aware of their own feelings they can find themselves prompted by compulsions, desires, fears and great over-insensitivity to the slightest threat.

These people often have little solidity and shape of their own. They can often mould to any situation, take on ideas and thoughts and movements around others. Water people dislike people who are boisterous and people who impose their strong personalities.

They can be secretive and self-contained and although they may appear calm on the outside they can have deep hidden undercurrents. Therefore the ability to hurt is quite high and it can lead to emotional instability or a predisposition to be easily influenced by the slightest criticism. This shouldn't be regarded as weakness because water has great force and penetrating power over a long period, especially when channelled. Water elements

correspond to the process of gaining consciousness through the slow but sure realisation of the soul's deepest yearning. Water people know instinctively that they must protect themselves from outside influences and the realisation of their true nature is a slow and often painful process, but as they become more and more willing to face their real motives they develop an increased inner contentment with the passage of years.

**4. Earth people:** earth, the fourth element, indicates the individual being in touch with the physical senses and the 'here and now' concrete reality of the material world. They rely upon the senses and common sense rather than inspiration or intuition. They merely have to be told how to fit into the world or how to make a living: supplying basic needs and so on is something that they are all too familiar with and do with ease. Strength and endurance enables earth people to look after themselves. This does not necessarily mean that they are particularly assertive, but they will speak up for themselves if endangered or if their security is threatened. They can be efficient in a matter-of-fact way; they can be premeditative, often conventional but usually reliable.

They can be very suspicious and dubious about lively and agile-minded people and they can react to air people with reserve. Although they may be fascinated by them, nevertheless they can feel that air people are up in the clouds and fire people can parch the earth too quickly. They share qualities of inquisitiveness and attentiveness and a certain self-protectiveness with water, so earth feels that water will refresh it and enable it to bring forth even more productivity. In the practical world, they can often limit their imagination by relying too much on things as they are or as they appear to be. They can become narrow in outlook and addicted to routine and order for its own sake and have difficulty with an inner life and the transpersonal element. However, it must be said that nature worship is a very 'earthy' way of seeing the Divine and encountering the transpersonal.

## Summary

### Summary: An Archetypal View of Development

**Archetypal identities give a richer potential** available to a particular stance.

**Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus and Mars:** basic personal factors.

**Jupiter and Saturn:** super conscious and sub-conscious.

**Venus, Neptune, and Pluto:** transcendent dimensions of experience.

**The elements** can be correlated with the lower chakras; qualities which have to be overcome in order for spiritual progress to proceed.

**Water: emotional** or the **astral body**; consciousness dominated by intense yearnings, reactions and compelling desires.

**Air: mental, causal body**; represents consciousness attuned to thought patterns of the universal mind.

**Earth: physical body**; attunement to physical senses in material forms.

**Fire: etheric or vital body**; a transformer of the air.

### Box 1: Summary: An Archetypal View of Development





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