

THE FOUR TEMPERAMENTS: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Also featuring the ultimate temperament



By Prosper Yole Ukiri
www.knowseeker.com

Introduction

The four temperament theory is one that has been extensively studied by several scholars. Temperaments are the prevalent personality of all individuals and based on similarities, all individuals have been classified into one of the four temperaments.

- 1. Choleric**
- 2. Sanguine**
- 3. Phlegmatic**
- 4. Melancholic**

The primary aim of learning about the temperaments is to be able to understand the complexities of why people behave the way they do. The imports of these are;

- i. To understand other people and to deal with them accordingly
- ii. To understand the strengths and weakness of your own temperament and improve on yourself.

This topic is also a topic for academic studies and hence, you may be asked to do a research about the four temperaments particularly if your academic disciplines is in the humanities.

In this document, you will see a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the four temperaments. In my own personal studies and lifelong observations, I also came up with another temperament type – the fifth and ultimate temperament. You will learn about this also in the course of this paper.

Dominant Features of the Four Temperaments

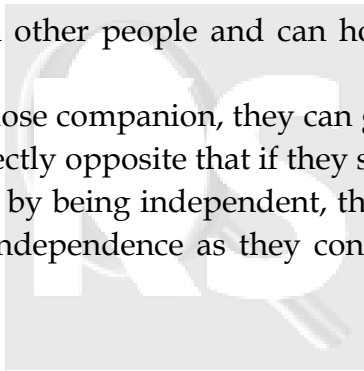
1. Choleric

Choleric derives its name from bile or yellowish color (Latin. Cholericus for bilious). Choleric are generally known to be extroverted and arrogant. The dominant features are;

- a. Choleric are dominant: Choleric seeks dominance, they are often authoritative and daring. Instead of asking “can I have a drink”, choleric would say “get me a drink”, and would avoid the word “please” as much as they can.
- b. Choleric are tough and domineering: Their peculiar strengths and resilience make them respected natural leaders. They love to challenge people to prove their abilities and help these people to develop their full potentials. However, this can make them to be seen as too intrusive, forceful and strict.
- c. They are confrontational or defensive: Choleric desires to be feared and would confront any opposition they face in a bid to re-establish their own position.

Choleric would stand up to defend someone who is being treated unfairly because they want to protect the person's respect as well as exercise their own dominance. Whereas, choleric would make the best bullies, they are also the greatest guardians.

- d. Choleric love competitions but hate to lose. They will do anything as long as it makes them remain dominant even if it means having to lie to save a face.
- e. Choleric are extroverted: Rather than mind their own business, choleric can sometimes meddle in the affairs of other people. They are free-spirited and extroverted, and can sometimes talk beyond proportion in the name of speaking their mind.
- f. They are honest about their opinions: Instead of sugar-coating their words to suit the situation or individual, choleric would bluntly say it as it is.
- g. Choleric are proud: Not proud in the sense of haughtiness but they generally believe they are always right. Their stubbornness and strong will deter them from admitting their flaws easily except if doing that will make them look better than other people.
- h. They seek respect from other people and can hold grudges against those they consider rivals.
- i. If they consider you a close companion, they can go to lengths of literally taking a bullet for you, but directly opposite that if they see you on their bad side.
- j. Choleric determine that by being independent, their superiority is preserved. So, they would strive for independence as they consider dependence as a form of weakness.



2. Sanguine

The name 'Sanguine' is derived from the color of blood (of both Latin and French origin). Sanguine are social, expressive and loving. The dominant features are as follows;

- a. Sanguine are sociable: They are free-spirited, chatty, openly emotional and extroverted. They find social interactions very interesting and easy to initiate. Sanguine are not picky in the type of people they interact with and can talk freely with anyone even if it's just their first time meeting.
- b. They love company and attention: The more people they are surrounded with, the happier they become. This is why they would do anything to seek attention. They feel good by just realizing that they are not alone.
- c. They are talkative: Sanguine prefer to do more of the talking than listening. Their loose mouth make them not very trustworthy to keep a secret.
- d. They make friends at a snap of the finger: Their sublime nature makes it easy to initiate friendship with a total stranger without feeling any strangeness. The

friendship may end up as soon as another “friend” walks by; sometimes only after exchanging names and saying a few salutations.

- e. They are expressive: They are talkative, energetic and playful. They express themselves in a friendly and lively manner, and they make a conversation with a stranger seem like a conversation between two people who have known themselves for life – so charismatic, so welcoming and so relaxing.
- f. They can be emotionally over-expressive: As easy as it is for them to get happy, they can also get emotionally irritated or down easily. When they do, they would utter the words “I hate you” without any hesitation.
- g. They are quick to forgive: Almost immediately after their outburst or anger, rage, or a combination of both, they quickly move and forget your wrongs. They simply live in the present but they expect others to be that way too and would remain careless in their actions.
- h. They also have a high sense of self-esteem: They are show-offs and can brag about themselves without minding if anyone may be offended by that.
- i. They freely express their emotions in the form of open hugs, stroking, grabbing shoulders, and so on.
- j. They are very untidy: Sanguine do not care so much about neatness or tidiness. Poor organization and messiness are the prices they have to pay for living only in the moment.

3. Phlegmatic

The name is derived from phlegm (Latin. for 'flame' and inflammation). However, for some unknown reasons, phlegmatic temperament was associated with the 'cold or cool' personality type. Phlegmatic individuals are described as calm, introverted, indecisive, and submissive. Here are their dominant characteristics;

- a. They are submissive and introverted: Phlegmatic are cool-headed, submissive and eager to please others rather than try to assert their own selves. They only wish for peace and would do anything to avoid conflict even if will be to their own discomfort.
- b. They are not competitive: The phlegmatic does not see a need to win or be the best if that can disrupt peace and harmony between everyone.
- c. They often find it hard to say “no” to request especially if it makes someone feel bad.
- d. They are very empathic: They understand people’s feelings because they always try to put themselves into their shoes rather than seeing events and actions from a selfish perspective.

- e. They are very indecisive: Because they easily submit to other people's choices and often want to please others, they are often very indecisive and would rather say nothing than make a decision.
- f. They are naturally unable to see themselves as capable to lead and don't have any intention to control people. They work best as followers and when they are told what to do.
- g. Phlegmatic are calm and non-intrusive: They are capable of staying calm either alone in company without intruding into the other person's space.
- h. They are not so concerned with perfection: They are not pick on people and do not judge others quickly.
- i. Instead of large company, phlegmatic would prefer to have selected few friends who are very loyal to them and who have being with them through thick or thin.
- j. They are immune to anything that trigger them to anger, successfully defusing and tolerating long periods of abuse.
- k. They are unstable outside familiar environments: Whereas they are confident in familiar situations, they often panic in unfamiliar ones. As long as they are fine, they are satisfied with predictable, quiet and ritualistic lifestyles rather than trendy, spontaneous and extremely dynamic ones.
- l. They are not show-offs: They are often silent about their life and achievements because they hate to be judged. They also consider that talking about themselves can be bothersome to other people.
- m. They are great listeners and will offer supportive feedback to friends but would only chip in a few 'necessary' words. They talk less often and when they do, their words are carefully thought and helpful.
- n. They are not concerned about boredom, in fact, they enjoy being alone. It is not anyone's duty to entertain them, make them happy or motivate them.
- o. They do not openly express a physical drive for doing things. Their passion remains hidden deep within them.

4. Melancholic

They derive their name from black bile (Melan - black; Chole - bile). They are generally emotionally sensitive and are best described as perfectionistic introverts. Here are their dominant features;

- a. They are perfectionist: They believe things should be done a certain fixed way and you will get them irritated or distressed at the slightest change.
- b. They hold everyone to high standards, including themselves: Melancholic would impose the same perfectionism they have for themselves on everyone else. This

make them very critical and easily unsatisfied with other people's actions, efforts and products. They are pretty hard to please.

- c. They care about the tiniest details: To the melancholic, every detail is important and ignorance of the details or inability to get it exactly right is a sign of imperfection and they hate imperfection.
- d. They ask questions to clarify things and get more understanding, rather than settling for mediocrity.
- e. They are stubborn and dogmatic to new trends and behaviors: Melancholic don't change their carefully-thought views and standards so easily and would only join a trend after they have carefully considered that it is safe to go by based on their own standards.
- f. They are very pessimistic: They assume the worst from the onset and try to plan carefully before taking any actions to avoid the slightest mistakes, instead of carrying out impulsive actions.
- g. When melancholic argue, it is not because they simply want to assert dominance. They genuinely want to understand your points because they feel failure to examine their ideas carefully can compromise their set standards. Sometimes, they cannot stand it when you say things that they fully understand to be "erroneous" and would make every effort to correct you even if it might go against your own peace.
- h. They are logic, evidence and reason-driven.
- i. Melancholic are extreme introverts: Of all the temperaments, melancholic have the most introverted individuals who are happier by themselves and being careful not to make any silly mistakes. In their own assessment, they perform best when they are alone and often consider the presence of other people a burden to them.
- j. They are not friendly: Don't get this the wrong way. Melancholic only require a very long time of observation and analyze before they can take someone as their friend but once they name you 'friend', just know that you have found one of your forever most loyal persons. Also, their high standards make them have very few close companions who understand them and who does not feel bad with their criticisms.
- k. They are extremely sensitive: When faced with failure, distress, loss and emotions, they easily break down and often channel blames to their own souls. This makes them more prone to mild depressive feelings, and sometimes overt depression.
- l. When offended, melancholic hold grudges for a very long time because they believe that those who hurt them intentionally did so and would not easily repent of their wrongs or adjust to their requirements for forgiveness.
- m. When confronted with things they dislike, their usual response is with tears and feelings of misery rather than aggression or confrontation. Their major comeback

is by making you feel guilty for attacking them, instead of physically inflicting physical harm.

Now that we have explored the dominant characters of the four temperaments, it will be appropriate to characterize these features into strengths and weaknesses, where strengths are positive attributes and weaknesses are negative traits.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Four Temperaments

Temperaments	Strengths	Weaknesses
Choleric	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strive for independence 2. Determination 3. Honesty 4. Tough and confident 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of tolerance 2. Unhealthy competition 3. Haughty pride
Sanguine	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Friendliness 2. Easy to forgive 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Haughty pride 2. Obsession for attention 3. Forgetfulness or lack of intimate relationship 4. Poor organization
Phlegmatic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Non-judgmental 2. Search for reason and logic 3. Great listening ability 4. Ability to distribute glory and efficiently dissipate defeat 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indecisiveness 2. Lack of self-confidence
Melancholic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Careful planning 2. Search for reason and logic 3. Search for reason and logic 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Easily offended 2. Self-guilt 3. Self-condemnation at the slightest mistake 4. Pessimism 5. Lack of tolerance

The Best Temperament & the Ultimate Temperament

Of the four temperaments, the sanguine are considered the most stable temperament types but in a system of classification that highlights some good features and otherwise, you would expect a lot of great attribute to be locked outside your reach if you do nothing about who you think you are.

The aim of the temperaments theory was to give us better understanding about who we are and who other people are so that we can optimize our own behaviors as well as understand how to deal with other people.

Not as if I, the author, am a melancholic who craves for perfection but I sought out to discover a better temperament type or at least one everyone should aim to achieve. I called this **The Ultimate Temperament** because it is the best there is.

The ultimate temperament is borne out of one's desire to conquer one's weaknesses imposed on one by one's own temperament type, a deliberate effort towards consolidating on one's strengths, as well as developing strengths from other temperament types.

The ultimate temperament is superior and better than all four temperaments because it is a positive blend of all four. Following the invention of the four temperament theory, another **five temperament theory** was discovered featuring the fifth temperament "Supine". The Supine is described as a gentle spirit. Whether or not supine is equivalent to the ultimate temperament I cannot fully establish here but if supine is a separate entity, the ultimate temperament will ever reign supreme.

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