**The Four Temperaments**

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Hippocrates (400 B.C.). Throughout history there have been many attempts to explain why people are different. One of the first systems developed was Astrology, which looked outside of man to explain the differences through "signs" symbolized by earth, air, fire and water. Hippocrates, however, looked inside of man to explain the differences. He believed that behavior was determined by the presence of an excessive amount of one of four fluids or humors; *yellow bile* (Chlor); *red bile* or blood (Sangis); *white bile* (Phlegm); *black bile* (Melan). Hippocrates, and other early Greeks, thought that an excess of one of the four humors produced a particular temperament and behavior.

The word "temperament" comes from the Latin word *temperamentum* and means "right blending." The Greeks thought that a person’s "temperament" was therefore made up of a blending of these four fluids.

**Hippocrates** and the early Greeks were accurate in their observations of behavior but were incorrect about the origin of these tendencies (they are not created by the excess of a fluid). Today we would say that they originate from a blend of genetic predisposition and the environment (nature vs. nurture).

**Galen** (129? - 203?) was a Greek physician, who lived 600 years after Hippocrates and was responsible for popularizing the temperaments during his time and relating them to illness. He is credited with coining the terms, Choleric, Sanguine, Phlegmatic and Melancholy.

**Description of the 4 Primary Temperaments**

The Choleric is an extroverted, hot-tempered, quick thinking, active, practical, strong-willed and easily annoyed person. Cholerics are self-confident, self-sufficient and very independent minded. They are decisive and opinionated and find it easy to make decisions for themselves as well as others. Cholerics tend to leave little room for negotiating. The Choleric is a visionary and seems to never run out of ideas, plans and goals, which are usually very practical. The Choleric does not require as much sleep as the other temperaments so their activity seems endless. Their activity almost always has a purpose because they are by nature result-oriented. They usually do not give in to the pressure of what others think unless they see that they cannot get the desired results. Cholerics can be crusaders against social injustice as they love to fight for a cause. Cholerics are both direct and firm when responding to others. They are slow to build relationships because results tend to be more important than people. They do not easily empathize with the feelings of others or show compassion. Cholerics think big and seek positions of authority.

The Sanguine is an extroverted, fun-loving, activity-prone, impulsive, entertaining, persuasive, easily amused and optimistic person. Sanguines are receptive and open to others and build relationships quickly. They are animated, excited and accepting of others. They will smile and talk easily and often. It is not unusual to feel as if you have known the Sanguine person  for years after only a few minutes. Sanguines are so people-oriented that they easily forget about time and are often late arriving at their destination. Sanguines get bored easily because of their orientation to social involvement, activity and general dislike for solitude. The Sanguine never lacks for friends. Their attention span is based on whether or not they are interested in the person or event. The Sanguine can change their focus or interest in an instant. Sanguines are competitive and tend to be disorganized. Unless very disciplined, the Sanguine will have difficulty controlling their emotions. They usually like sports of any kind because of the activity and involvement with other people. Their voice will show excitement and friendliness. Sanguines usually dress according to current fashion. The Sanguine fears rejection or not making a favorable impression. They also fear others viewing them as unsuccessful. Sanguines are very effective working with people.

The Phlegmatic is an introverted, calm, unemotional, easygoing, never-get-upset, person. Phlegmatics are both slow and indirect when responding to others. They are also slow to warm-up but will be accommodating in the process. Phlegmatics are by far the easiest person with which to get along. They live a quiet, routine, life, free of the normal anxieties and stresses of the other temperaments. The Phlegmatic will avoid getting too involved with people and life in general. Phlegmatics seldom exert themselves with others or push their way along in their career, they just let it happen. The Phlegmatic communicates a warm, sincere interest in others preferring to have just a few close friends. They will  be very loyal to their friends and find it difficult to break long standing relationships regardless of what the other person does. The Phlegmatic tends to resist change of any kind without reason, other than they just do not want the change to occur. Phlegmatics show little emotion and are prone to be a grudge holder. Phlegmatics tend to avoid conflict and making decisions of any kind. They are practical, concrete and traditional thinkers. Their stoic expression often hides their true feelings. The Phlegmatic may be patient to the point of paralysis. Phlegmatics are persistent and consistent at whatever they undertake.

The Melancholy is an introverted, logical, analytical, factual, private, lets-do-it-right person. Melancholies respond to others in a slow, cautious and indirect manner. Melancholies are reserved and suspicious until sure of your intentions. The Melancholy probe for the "hidden meaning" behind your words. They are timid and may appear unsure and have a serious expression. They are self-sacrificing, gifted and they tend to be a perfectionist. Melancholies are very sensitive to what others think about their work. The Melancholy is well organized; on occasion you may find a Melancholy that keeps things cluttered, however, they know what’s in the piles. The Melancholy is determined to make the right and best decision. Melancholies will ask specific questions and sometimes they will ask the same question again and again. The Melancholy needs reassurance, feedback and reasons why they should do something. They need information, time to think and a plan. The Melancholy fears taking a risk, making a wrong decision and being viewed as incompetent. Melancholies tend to have a negative attitude toward something new until they have had time to think it over. Melancholies are skeptical about most everything but they are creative and capable people. Melancholies tend to get bored with something once they get it figured out.