

THE FOUR BASIC TEMPERAMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Uniqueness versus General characteristics

- Each individual is unique
- Individuals do however, display similar patterns of behaviour

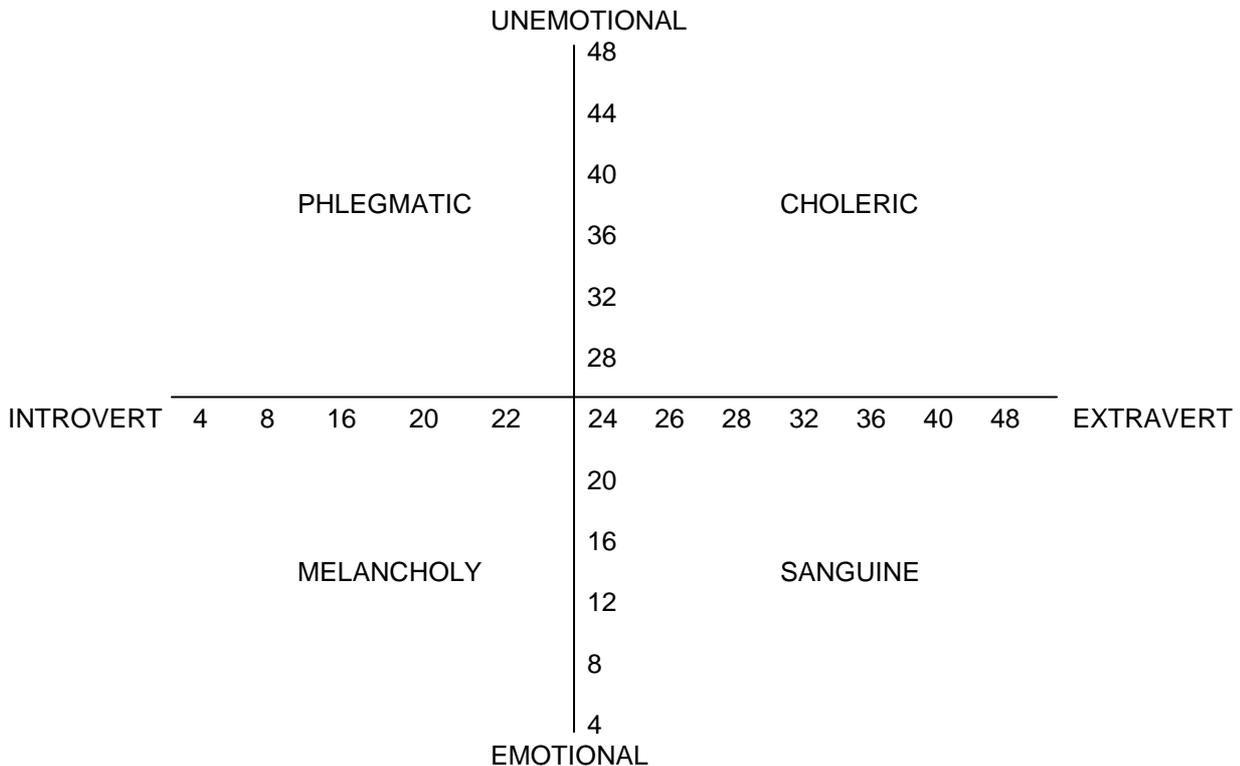
Two scales that indicate temperament:

Temperament combinations

- Most people have a dominant and a back-up temperament
- About 10% of people are all-rounders

All behaviour patterns can be changed, if the individual:

- wants to change
- knows what to change to
- receives encouragement to make the change



THE SANGUINE (Yellow – Promoter)

Strengths

- Warm-hearted, spontaneous, enthusiastic, sociable, active and enjoys lots of friends, expresses emotions freely, generous

Weaknesses

- Impulsive, talkative, weak-willed, compromises easily, changes moods rapidly, loves to be the centre of attention, has a strong need to be accepted by everyone

Peter the Sanguine (Yellow)

Impulsive

- Invites friends to his house while his mother-in-law is ill in bed (Mark 1:29)
- Walks on water on the spur of the moment (Mark 14:28,29)
- Chops off the servant's ear with his sword (John 18:10)
- Jumps overboard to get to Jesus (John 21:7)

Talkative

- Speaks without knowing what to say on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9:33)
- Argues with Jesus (Luke 5:4,5 Matthew 16:22)
- At the trial of Jesus he was recognised by his accent (Matthew 26:73)

Self-centred

- Focuses the attention on his own virtues (Matthew 19:27, 26:33)

Weak-willed

- The denial of Jesus showed how easily Peter compromised in order to be accepted by the crowd (Matthew 26:69-74)

Rapidly-changing moods

- The one moment he is cursing Jesus, the next moment he is weeping bitterly (Matthew 26:74,75)

The Spirit-filled Peter

Fearless

- He addresses a mocking crowd (Acts 2:14)
- He challenges the Jewish Council boldly (Acts 4:19,20)

Humble

- Raises Dorcas from the dead without any display (Acts 9:40)
- Accepts Paul 's reprimand without resentment (Galatians 2:14) after his natural inclination to seek acceptance temporarily gained the upper hand

Emotionally controlled

- His handling of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5: 3-10)
- Only gets involved in a strong debate at the end (Acts 15:7)

THE CHOLERIC (Red - Producer)

Strengths

- Confident, pioneering, purposeful, strong-willed, self-disciplined, natural leader and organiser, decisive

Weaknesses

- Emotionally deficient, unsympathetic, domineering, impatient, self-sufficient, wants things done his way, stubborn, critical

Paul the Choleric

Aggressive

- The manner in which he persecuted the Christians (Acts 26:10)

Achievement-oriented

- The hardships which he endured in order to preach the gospel (2 Cor 11:23-28)

Self-disciplined

- Pursues his goal regardless of the past (Philippians 3:14)
- He ensures that he is equipped for the race (1 Corinthians 9:26,27)

Pioneering

- Continually looking for new areas to preach the gospel (Rom. 15:20)

Dynamic leader

- Even when a prisoner he gave commands to a Roman centurion, and he was listened to (Acts 27:20-36)

Unsympathetic

- Reprimands Peter in front of other people (Galatians 2:14)
- Refuses to take Mark with him on the second journey (Acts 15:37-39)

Self-sufficient

- Provides not only for his own needs, but also for those of his companions (Acts 20:34)
- When a prisoner in Rome, he lived in his own rented house (Acts 28:30)

Independent

- Initially did not consult with other apostles, and refers somewhat sceptically to "those who seemed to be important" (Gal. 1:16, 2:6)

Determined

- Determined to go to Jerusalem, despite the serious warnings against doing so, and the dangers he would face (Acts 21:10-14)

The Choleric shows less of the fruit of the Spirit (as listed in Gal .5:22) than any other temperament. Yet in the course of time Paul gave evidence of all these qualities.

- Love (Romans 9:1-3)
- Goodness (Galatians 6:10)
- Joy (Philippians 4:4)
- Faithfulness (1 Cor.15:58)
- Peace (Philippians 4:6,7)
- Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
- Patience (1 Thessalonians 5:14)
- Self-control (1 Cor. 9:27)
- Kindness (2 Timothy 2:24)
- Forgiveness (2 Tim.4: 11)
- Contentment (Phil.4:1~,12)

THE MELANCHOLY (Blue – Planner)

Strengths

- Analytical, gifted, creative, self-sacrificing, avoids the limelight, loyal, maintains high standards, deep-thinking

Weaknesses

- Introspective, touchy, moody, self-pitying, suspicious, easily angered, pessimistic, indecisive, perfectionist, self-deprecating

Moses the Melancholy

Gifted

- Educated in all the wisdom of Egypt (Acts 7:22)
- Humble and self-sacrificing
- More Humble than anyone else on the face of the earth (Numbers 12:3)
- Willing to be wiped out if God did not forgive His people (Exod 32:32)
- Did not want to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter (Heb 11:24)

Self-deprecating

- In case he felt inferior he was quite willing to spend the rest of his life in the desert, looking after sheep (Exodus 3:1)
- When God called him he had all kinds of excuses:
- Not good enough for the task (Exodus 3:10,11)

- I've had no theological training (Exodus 3:13)
- I'm scared that they won't accept me (Exodus 4:1)
- I am not good at speaking in public (Exodus 4:10)
- After he had run out of excuses, he made one last attempt, and God became angry with him (Exodus 4:13,14)

Perfectionist

- Only he was competent enough to judge the people, and therefore he did not think of delegating (Exodus 18:13-18)

Depressed and angry

- He felt very sorry for himself when the people rebelled (Num. 11:10-15)
- He threw down the Stone Tablets in anger (Exodus 32:19)
- It was his anger that prevented him from entering the Promised Land (Numbers 20:3-5, 9-12)

YET MOSES BECAME THE GREATEST LEADER THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN

THE PHLEGMATIC (Green – Peacemaker)

Strengths

- Calm, easy-going, controlled emotions, peacemaker, high stress tolerance, thinks before acting, dry humour, a faithful friend, reliable

Weaknesses

- Lethargic, indecisive, fearful, self-centred, reluctant to become involved, unenthusiastic, unresponsive, sarcastic

Abraham the Phlegmatic

Cautious

- Halfway to Canaan, he settled in Haran (Genesis 11:31)

Reluctant to trust God

- He fled to Egypt as soon as there was a famine (Genesis 12:10)
- Allows Pharaoh to marry Sarah because he feared for his life (Genesis 12:12)
- A few years later he did the same thing (Genesis 20:11)

Peaceable - at all costs

- When his herdsmen argued with those of Lot, he was willing to do anything (even giving up the Promised Land) for the sake of peace (Genesis 13:7-9)
- He was henpecked by his wife (Genesis 16:5,6)

Faithful friend

- Rescued Lot even though they had quarrelled (Genesis 14:14-16)
- Tithed faithfully to acknowledge dependence on God (Genesis 14:20)

YET HE BECAME THE FATHER OF FAITH

- He believed that God would restore Isaac to him again (Genesis 22:12)
- Is used as an example to illustrate righteousness through faith (Romans 4:16-22)
- Is listed in the "Gallery of Faith Heroes" (Hebrews 11:17-19)
- In time he again became the leader in the home and his wife submitted to him (1 Peter 3:6)

CONCLUSION

Analysing your own temperament is never an excuse to indulge in your weaknesses. The only reason for taking a closer look at yourself, is to allow God to do something about the weaknesses, and to allow Him to use your strengths to His glory

TYPICAL BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS THAT CAUSE PROBLEMS IN THE (MARRIAGE) RELATIONSHIP

SANGUINE PARTNERS

Expression of love

- Very demonstrative, even in public - can be very embarrassing to partner
- They give themselves wholeheartedly to love-making - uninhibited, regardless of their partners' moods
- Very hurt if partners don't respond actively to loving approaches, because their expressions of love are mostly aimed at satisfying their own need for affection
- Emotionally unpredictable - angry one minute, and ready for lovemaking the next

Social interaction

- They talk non-stop, mostly about themselves - and not very attentive to what others have to say
- They enjoy people and then forget them - rather insensitive to the needs of others
- They enjoy the attention of the opposite sex - and can fall more easily for someone else
- They like to charm the opposite sex to boost their own ego - often naive about the emotions they arouse in other people

Personal characteristics

- Undisciplined, disorganised and numerous unfinished projects in the home
- They often make excuses for negligence e.g. late-coming, not keeping a promise, etc.
- Poor administrators of money - will often purchase articles on the spur of the moment
- Because of their strong need for acceptance they are inclined to put the needs of others before the needs of their own family

CHOLERIC PARTNERS

Expression of love

- Expressions of affection outside the bedroom are not frequent
- Unromantic since sentimentality is regarded as a weakness
- Impatient in love-making - not given to tender drawn-out love-play
- Can make love anywhere, anytime and therefore seldom take the trouble to "prepare" their partners

Social interaction

- They have strong views which are expressed forcefully - differences of opinion are a strong challenge to "win"
- They will not change their views easily because they hate to be proved wrong
- Unsympathetic to partners' feelings, fears, upsets, etc. and thus they make little attempt to understand their partners
- Very critical of partners - and make them feel inadequate

Personal characteristics

- Hard-working, well organised - and they become very annoyed when their schedule/orderliness is disrupted by others
- They make decisions quickly on the basis of practicality. Appearance of articles or other people's feelings are usually ignored
- Domineering - they often make decisions for their partners because they are keen to have their own way
- Bored by details - they often tackle a project without thinking it through carefully

MELANCHOLY PARTNERS

Expression of love

- Don't express affection easily - even when they feel very loving
- Love-making is strongly affected by moods and atmosphere - and they experience extreme fluctuations in desire

- Inclined to make love as reward for partner's good behaviour - and they are easily put off when things are not "perfect" in the house
- They often experience strong feelings of jealousy and need frequent reassurance of their partners' affection

Social interaction

- Will not easily reveal deep-lying emotions. Feelings are bottled up with periodic outbursts to release them
- They don't give many compliments because they are seldom satisfied with themselves or with their partners - inclined to be pessimistic
- Easily angered, offended, hurt, but will not express this openly. Inclined to communicate non-verbally
- Social behaviour is strongly influenced by over sensitivity to what others might think of them - and they are inclined to be suspicious of the motives of others

Personal characteristics

- They have great difficulty in making decisions, especially in areas that are subject to "public view" e.g. clothes, furniture, etc.
- They cannot think quickly and become disorganised under time pressure, emotional stress, and physical weariness
- More likely to be affected by feelings of inferiority than any other temperament - and blame themselves for things that go wrong or generally run themselves down
- Periodically they feel very sorry for themselves when they can't meet their own perfectionist standards - and usually their partners get the blame

PHLEGMATIC PARTNERS

Expression of love

- They don't see the need to express their affection frequently. Love is usually expressed through helping their partners faithfully
- Very gentle in lovemaking. Afraid that they may lose partner's respect if they "let themselves go"
- They seldom initiate love-play - inclined to wait for their partners to do so
- When they do initiate they will do it very carefully, and back off if their partners do not respond positively straightaway

Social interaction

- They don't communicate much at all - neither about themselves nor about events
- They appear to be indifferent to the emotional needs of others they show very little non-verbal reaction
- Seldom get upset - but don't get very excited either, and this can have a dampening effect on partner's enthusiasm
- They want peace at all costs - and will put up with all kinds of negative behaviour from partner rather than talk it out

Personal characteristics

- Will avoid decisions as much as possible - happy to leave it to their partners
- Will put off making decisions in the hope that the problem will resolve itself
- Very reluctant to become involved in any "problem" Situations
- They evaluate their marital happiness by "the lack of open conflict" i.e. we are happily married if we don't fight

MARRIAGE PARTNERS WITH THE SAME TEMPERAMENTS

Sanguine partners - Endless talking with little listening, a disorganised home, but lots of fun

Choleric partners - A stormy relationship, a well-organised home and very productive lives

Melancholy partners - A fluctuating relationship, an artistic home, and very creative lives

Phlegmatic partners - A calm relationship, an easy-going atmosphere in the home, but with many things left undone

WHY ARE OPPOSITES ATTRACTED TO EACH OTHER?

We see in the other person strengths that we do not have ourselves

After the wedding we discover that our strengths are their weaknesses At that stage every couple makes a **critical** decision:

- to concentrate on one another's strengths, or
- to concentrate on one another's weaknesses

COPING WITH TEMPERAMENT DIFFERENCES

The problem does not lie with our partner's behaviour, but with **our reaction to that behaviour**. The key to coping with these differences does not lie therefore in changing our partner's behaviour, but in changing our reactions

1. Acceptance - Don't try to change your partner
2. Reinforcement - Build your partner up with praise and appreciation
3. Complementing - Give support/assistance in areas where partner is weak
4. Feedback - Agree to point out negative behaviour to one another
5. Thanksgiving - Thank God daily for your partner - just as he/she is

KNEECAP SESSION

The rules

- Take two upright chairs and face each other so that your kneecaps touch one another
- Take turns to answer each question
- Don't attack your partner - only describe the behaviour that causes problems
- Don't defend yourself - the real issue is how your partner perceived your actions
- Write down your discussions and agreements

The questions

- What do you consider to be my strengths? What do I do well?
- Which one temperament characteristic of mine causes the most conflict and friction in our relationship?
- In which areas would you like me to accept you more?
- In which way do I react inappropriately? How should I react?
- In which areas can I give you more support and complement you?

Close your session with prayer - both thanking God for each other.