

Choleric Melancholic

These notes are taken from 'Understanding Yourself' by John Sparkes, a temperament manual which is written from the perspective of what a child needs as they are growing up. It is available as an [ebook](#) via Amazon.

1. Powerful potential

When the Choleric Melancholic is at peace with himself there is enormous potential for the qualities and talents of the Melancholic to be communicated out into life through the strength of the Choleric. When that peace is missing the endless dilemmas that result can cause inner confusion.

2. Self-condemnation

To illustrate, imagine a 100% Choleric husband (unreformed) with a 100% Melancholic wife. Before any interaction begins the Choleric feels himself to be at the top of the ladder while the Melancholic would feel she was on the bottom rung. She expresses herself with emotion, but he sees this as a sign of weakness for he controls his feelings by repression and by remaining aloof from them. He expects her to do the same.

He has no comprehension of her 'feel for life' and dismisses it as unhelpful and irrelevant. He is frustrated by her apparent inability to view life in the same logical way as he does. Her insight into situations and subsequent caution leads him to dismiss her wisdom as overly negative and pessimistic. The only way she can cope with the rejected perceptions is to somehow make herself the guilty party. This further lowers her sense of worth and erodes her confidence. In the end she will retreat into herself.

Now this scenario is acted out within one person in the case of the Choleric Melancholic and the result is an irrational, but powerful, self-criticism and self-condemnation.

3. Sensitive to criticism

This established position of self-criticism means that whenever there is even the slightest hint of criticism he will take it personally. He will anticipate criticism and will work hard to try and 'get things right' in order to avoid it. When he does miss it his resultant sense of failure is out of all proportion.

4. Projecting onto others

The Choleric Melancholic will anticipate that what they feel about themselves is what others feel about them too. They project onto others what they feel about themselves and at that point the Choleric rises up in self-defence.

5. Missing the Melancholic

Careful attention must be given to the introvert temperament. The strength of the Choleric can mean that the Melancholic is missed altogether. However, the feelings of the Melancholic remain and do their ongoing work. Fears, insecurity, low self-esteem and feelings of panic can all sit just beneath the surface. Sometimes they break through the Choleric and threaten to overwhelm. Often the Choleric Melancholic survives and copes with life by living in the Choleric – but he is affected by the Melancholic. Because the Melancholic sits just beneath

the surface the feelings are never processed so he regards that part of who he is as his dark or fearful side that he has to learn to live with.

6. Proportion of Melancholic

The proportion of temperaments is important with this blend. If the amount of Melancholic is small it can be more easily missed - but it will always make its presence felt. When there is a balance, the two temperaments do not sit comfortably together as they are equal and opposite. In this case, when the emotions of the Melancholic with its perfectionism, creativity and tendency to morbidity, feed into the mind of a Choleric, which has to have everything 'right', then the explosive mix is plain to see! The potential for deep anger, resentment and even revenge is there. The resulting guilt further complicates the picture.

7. Reaching the Choleric Melancholic

Before the sensitivity of the Melancholic can be reached the fortress of the Choleric has to be breached. This requires wisdom as a tough approach puts the sensitive Melancholic into retreat and a gentle approach fails to get past the strong Choleric.

8. Functioning as a whole person

There has to be a resolution of the conflict between the two temperaments. If the Choleric feels himself to be at the top of the ladder and the Melancholic at the bottom, then they need to meet halfway. For this to happen:

the Choleric must:

- a. not use the Choleric as a defence to stop someone getting to the Melancholic.
- b. recognise that Choleric pride plays a part in his unwillingness to accept that he is a Melancholic.
- c. stop the continuous criticism of the Melancholic (catch yourself at it) and begin to appreciate and value the qualities of the Melancholic.
- d. start to look at life through the eyes of his Melancholic temperament.

the Melancholic must:

- a. stop believing that he is not good enough and start to value himself as a Melancholic.
- b. take responsibility for himself. The ability to project negative thoughts and feelings onto others stops him taking responsibility for his words and actions and makes it easy for him to shift the blame.
- c. begin to trust. The Melancholic can withdraw into himself frequently enough for it to become a pattern that needs to be broken. Cynicism and negativity come in and become an excuse for not reaching out and changing.

When the Melancholic is comfortable with itself the battle with the Choleric will be over. Then the Choleric becomes a strong means of taking out into the world all the depth and qualities of the Melancholic in a positive and determined way.