

Choleric Phlegmatic

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. Force for good

When the Phlegmatic has been taught to be involved in life, with tenderness and empathy, combined with Choleric strength this combination can be a force for good. When the Phlegmatic has been neglected or missed, stubbornness and control can combine with Choleric strength to form a defence that is hard to breach. Anyone trying to reach his tenderness must be prepared to go through the Choleric strength, en route to his heart.

2. They need each other

When this person struggles on without the counterbalancing effect of the Phlegmatic the worst of the Choleric can come out with the resultant 'mental-level' approach to life. Such a person can feel lonely, frustrated and isolated.

3. The real needs

Early involvement of parents is vital, obliging the child to get involved, providing warmth and security as well as clear guidelines backed by firm authority. Especially important will be his need to express his feelings in an ongoing, constructive way as the natural tendency is to repression. These ingredients are important in any child's upbringing but the lack of them is especially damaging to the Choleric Phlegmatic.

4. A closer look

For an individual to be whole the two main temperaments need to be co-operating, understanding and accepting each other. So we will look more closely at how the Choleric and Phlegmatic interact.

5. How does the Choleric view the Phlegmatic?

The Choleric feels that he should not have to stop to get involved in such unproductive issues as the feelings of the Phlegmatic. They are beneath him. They are just distractions from the real goals of life and he feels he should be stronger than to indulge in such time-wasting activities.

6. How does the Phlegmatic feel about this?

The Phlegmatic will feel itself to be threatened by the impatience and frustrations of the Choleric towards it. The Phlegmatic instinctively curls up and protects itself. That will be its response to the strength of the Choleric.

7. Resolving the conflict

a. Choleric

The Choleric has to see that he needs the Phlegmatic. If he has two temperaments it cannot be right to try to get by on one – however strong that one might be! He needs to see the vital role that his Phlegmatic could play in ensuring that his strength is correctly channelled, and his goals are realistic and constructive. He must recognise that the Phlegmatic has as much

right to be there as he does – and treat him on an equal footing! The Phlegmatic will need to take time to listen and to share feelings. The Choleric must use his strength to make sure this happens rather than his dominance and control to prevent it.

b. Phlegmatic

The Phlegmatic should take the time to share all that goes on deep inside. He needs to know that what he feels is important, stick with it and not allow himself to be intimidated by the Choleric. He must be himself with his fun, easy-going and practical approach to life. The Choleric Phlegmatic will need to feel that he is important for who he is and not just for what he achieves.