

## Double Introvert – Phlegmatic Melancholic

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

A Double Introvert has the sensitivity of the Melancholic and the tenderness of the Phlegmatic. That double dose of quality means they are inferior to no-one. The Phlegmatic has all the qualities of an introvert but can do the amazing thing of doubling as an extrovert when they need to. The Phlegmatic can come across like a Choleric in the work situation and a Sanguine in leisure times. What more can they want?

However, a Double Introvert often believes that there is something fundamentally wrong with them because they don't have an extrovert temperament. They can feel 'emotionally disabled'. When they compare themselves, always unfavourably, with those around them, they feel unable to keep up. They might strive but conclude that they will never be good enough. They therefore settle into a different position, just below the line of 'normality'. It is easy to become defensive, anti-establishment, and looking to be different for significance. The answer is for them to recognise that they have an abundance of treasure.

### 1. Treat them as individuals

Both temperaments have to be looked at separately. As both are introvert it would be easy to see them as merging into each other. Each strength and weakness of each temperament needs to be understood.

### 2. Involved Phlegmatic?

Has this person chosen to get involved in life? The Phlegmatic can act as a doorway into the Melancholic so in a 'switched off' or detached Phlegmatic it will be more difficult to see the sensitive, creative Melancholic.

### 3. Not looking?

A Phlegmatic Melancholic can use his Phlegmatic to avoid looking at the Melancholic. If he does not like what he sees within the Melancholic and feels unable to process his thoughts and feelings he will live in the Phlegmatic. As a result he will not know himself nor will he let anyone get near the Melancholic. If this is the case then he will most likely be living in the unreality that the Phlegmatic is capable of creating as part of his escape from what he feels he cannot cope with. He may well present a pleasing and acceptable image but it is a far cry from what is going on inside.

### 4. Selective involvement

The presence of the Phlegmatic means there will often be selective involvement. What has he chosen to get involved in? What does that tell us about him? What are the resultant frustrations within him because of what he has not got involved in? When he has chosen to not get involved what has he done with his Melancholic creative potential? He is the introvert of the introverts. He might switch off as a Phlegmatic but all his creative potential is still there.

He will create but it will be an introverted creativity and it is likely that those instincts will be distorted. Whether it is in the area of sex, art, music or even making home the potential is there for distorted creativity. If he becomes grossly self-absorbed his surroundings can deteriorate into total chaos. As part of his healing, as a Melancholic, he will need to express his creativity and, as a Phlegmatic to share his time, possessions and himself. It will be important to express the feelings and thoughts of both the Melancholic and Phlegmatic. If he can be encouraged to be involved in every aspect of relationships the potential is there for fascinating and creative interaction.

The following picture helps to describe the particular dynamics which take place within a Double Introvert:

### **The castle**

Imagine a beautiful castle. A long path leads to the castle and then encircles it. Many years ago the castle was reputed to contain some of the finest treasures in the country. A family lived there happily and, on certain days, the gates to the estate and castle were thrown open and visitors were shown around so that they too could enjoy the beautiful treasures. A local man from the village was employed as a tour guide.

Then something went wrong, but no-one knows quite what happened. Word got out that there had been a dispute and the treasure had been taken away. Visitor days were stopped and, when some of the locals went to investigate, instead of a friendly welcome, they were met by a guard on duty.

The beautiful castle is the Melancholic, full of priceless treasures. So much depends upon the Phlegmatic and their response to the Melancholic. If they feel confident with the Melancholic then they will be the tour guide, happily letting people in and taking out those treasures to share with people in exhibitions around the country. The Phlegmatic decides – they will either close the place down or make it available for everyone to enjoy. Just like the path that runs around the castle, so the Phlegmatic wraps themselves around the Melancholic, standing just at the point where the path leading to the castle joins the circular path. The Phlegmatic exercises ultimate control.

Imagine one day that word gets out that there had been a misunderstanding and that the treasures are in the castle – and have been all the time. The sentry can now get rid of his guard's uniform and get back to doing what he does best – making the treasures available to all.

The key in the allegory is what the Melancholic feels about themselves and how the Phlegmatic responds to that. If the Melancholic feels there is nothing of value within then they will retreat and close down. The Phlegmatic responds by taking control. That control can take a number of forms – sometimes a cutting humour is the first choice of weapon, for others it can be a cruel negativity. The Phlegmatic can be a chameleon and adjust to the environment so they can be what they think people want them to – rather like the sentry becoming a clown and doing tricks on the front lawn to prevent people from getting near to the castle.



When the Phlegmatic chooses to get involved and make all the lovely qualities of the Melancholic available this temperament mix can be superb.