

Sanguine 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. Lovely combination

This can be a lovely combination when the Phlegmatic has been taught to get involved with life and people. When this is not the case the Sanguine becomes the 'opt-out' with all the resulting superficiality. He comes across as the one who always has a joke at the ready and the more troubled he is emotionally the more zany will be his humour.

2. Strong defence

Where the Phlegmatic has been neglected or damaged the weaknesses of the Phlegmatic and Sanguine combine to become the defence that keeps out the person trying to reach him. The Sanguine need to always 'be on top' and the protection of the Phlegmatic combine to form a seemingly impregnable defence. The deeper the damage to the Phlegmatic, the stronger the defence. An understanding of the effect of key people in the formative years can often be helpful in unlocking the door for this person.

3. Why bother?

The Sanguine, more than any other, will find it hardest to deal with his introvert temperament. The reason is that he feels little need to, for the Sanguine has a wonderful ability to get by. His superficiality does not move him to bother to get involved with painful, difficult things like emotions!

Other people are more aware of the needs of this temperament combination than he is and the result is painful frustration all round.

For this person to function as a whole person he needs to stop arguing as a Sanguine, choose to get involved as a Phlegmatic and keep going back to the person attempting to communicate with him until he feels what is in the other person's heart. He must learn to detect, identify and express the faintest movements of emotion within himself until living life at that level becomes the norm.

4. A closer look

A basic requirement for a sense of well-being is that our two main temperaments get on together. So, we will look more closely at how they interact and how to resolve any conflict between them.

5. How does the Sanguine view the Phlegmatic?

The Phlegmatic is an irritation, a nuisance to the Sanguine. It keeps trying to send signals about things that do not matter! It is stopping him from enjoying life. It is a nagging reminder that things might not be what they should be.

6. How does the Phlegmatic feel about this?

The Phlegmatic naturally quickly curls up and this is how it will respond to the irritation and dismissiveness of the Sanguine. It avoids conflict, pain and confrontation so will not stand and fight for itself. Unless it has been trained to be involved it will be weak and so will instinctively turn in on itself until it becomes like a tightly clenched fist.

7. Resolving the conflict

a. Sanguine

The Sanguine has to always be on top. That means that it will deal with the Phlegmatic by always having to be on top. The Sanguine has to stop, be still and listen to the Phlegmatic, take it seriously and act on what it is told. It must allow the Phlegmatic to let the glimpses of emotion register more deeply and then pursue them. If he does not do this he will treat people in the same way as he treats his emotions. He must learn to listen to his heart and to those around who can share their feelings at depth.

b. Phlegmatic

It is down to choice and desire. When he wants something so much that he will go through all the barriers within himself to reach it then wholeness soon comes. People can make it uncomfortable for him to stay where he is but in the end it is down to his own desire to make it happen. He must not let the innate weakness of the Phlegmatic and the attitude of the Sanguine prevent him from engaging with life at the deepest level. He must knock at the Sanguine's door until it takes notice and listens to those emotions that can provide so much essential information and enable life to be lived to the full. He should view the abilities of the Sanguine as a means of taking the Phlegmatic emotions and communicating them in a manner that builds relationships.