

The Four Temperaments

David Keirsey's temperament theory extends the scheme laid down by Hippocrates, Galen, and Kretschmer. The 16 temperament and personality types described in PTypes are classified in groups of four under Ernst Kretschmer's hyperesthetic, anesthetic, depressive, and hypomanic temperaments.

According to the Encyclopædia Britannica, in psychology, [temperament](#) is the aspect of personality concerned with emotional dispositions and reactions and their speed and intensity; the term often is used to refer to the prevailing mood or mood pattern of a person. The notion of temperament in this sense originated with Galen who developed it from an earlier physiological theory of four basic body fluids (humours): blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile. According to their relative predominance in the individual, they were supposed to produce, respectively, temperaments designated sanguine (warm, pleasant), phlegmatic (slow-moving, apathetic), melancholic (depressed, sad), and choleric (quick to react, hot tempered).

A current scientific understanding of [temperament](#).

Included here is a [Correlation of the Four Temperaments](#) adapted from Keirsey's listing of authors whom he says have variously described the temperaments, a comparison of various [four dimension personality instruments](#), a representation of the [PTypes Typology of Temperament](#), and an [excerpt from Kretschmer's Physique and Character](#), "The Theory of Temperaments"

Correlation of the Four Temperaments

	Schizothymic		Cyclothymic	
Plato -340	Philosopher	Scientist	Guardian	Artisan
Aristotle -325	Ethical	Dialectical	Proprietary	Hedonic
Galen 200	Melancholic	Choleric	Phlegmatic	Sanguine
Adickes 1907	Dogmatic	Agnostic	Traditional	Innovative
Spränger 1914	Religious	Theoretical	Economic	Esthetic
Kretschmer 1921	Hyperesthetic	Anesthetic	Depressive	Hypomanic
Fromm 1947	Hoarding	Marketing	Receptive	Exploiting
Keirsey 1978	Apollonian	Promethean	Epimethean	Dionysian
Keirsey 1987	Idealists	Rationals	Guardians	Artisans
PTypes 2001	Idealist	Rationalist	Traditionalist	Hedonist
PTypes 2004	Hyperesthetic	Anesthetic	Depressive	Hypomanic

Adapted and modified from table in David Keirsey. (1995). Portraits of Temperament. 3rd. ed. Del Mar, CA: Prometheus Nemesis. pp. 6,12; and David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates. (1978). Please Understand Me: Character and Temperament Types. Del Mar, CA: Prometheus Nemesis, pp. 3-4, 29-30. and David Keirsey. (1998) Please Understand Me II. Del Mar, CA: Prometheus Nemesis, pg. 26.

Four Dimension Personality Instruments

It was Jung's opinion that people instinctively understand the personality in terms of a set of four elements (his four types being one example of such a set, and the four humours of the Greeks being another). These groups of four (technically called *tetralogies*) underlie a very large number of personality assessment techniques.

-- [Disc Interconsult](#).

A Comparison of Four Dimension Personality Instruments*				
William Moulton Marston	D	I	S	C
	Dominance	Influence	Steadiness	Compliance
DISC Personality System -	Dominant	Influencing	Steady	Compliant
Merrill-Reid Personal Styles	Driver	Expressive	Amiable	Analytical
LaHaye/Littauer, Hippocrates	Powerful Choleric	Popular Sanguine	Peaceful Phlegmatic	Perfect Melancholic
Smalley/Trent Animals	Lion	Otter	Golden Retriever	Beaver
The Color Code, Hartman	Red	Yellow	White	Blue
True Colors	Green	Orange	Gold	Blue
David W. Keirsey	Rationals NT	Artisans SP	Guardians SJ	Idealists NF

* Adapted from <http://www.cfcministry.org/personalityid/adltres.htm>, [Crown Financial Ministries](#).

Basic Desires

Temperament	Basic Desire*	Trait	Description
Idealist	perfection	perfectionism	hypersensitive detachment
Rationalist	power	sadism	insensitive detachment
Traditionalist	peace	masochism	depressive attachment
Hedonist	popularity	narcissism	manic attachment

* Adapted from: Littauer, Florence. (1995). *Put power in your personality! : match your potential with America's leaders*. Grand Rapids, Mich. : F.H. Revell.

PTypes - Types of Temperament (Evolutionary Psychology - prototypal)

Schizothymic

(Detachment theory: Apollonian Sublimation)

Hyperesthetic (Perfectionism, active detachment)

Obsessive-Compulsive

Avoidant

Paranoid

Histrionic

Anesthetic (Aggressiveness, passive detachment)

Sadistic

Schizotypal

Compensatory Narcissistic

Schizoid

Cyclothymic

(social exchange and threat Attachment/Rank theory: Dionysian Splitting and Projective Identification)

Depressive (Altruism dysthymia (social exchange), yielding subroutine)

Passive-Aggressive

Depressive

Masochistic

Dependent

Hypomanic (Narcissism (threat), winning subroutine)

Narcissistic

Antisocial

Borderline

Cyclothymic

Ernst Kretschmer

from Ernst Kretschmer's *Physique and Character*, "The Theory of Temperaments"

THE TEMPERAMENTS

Cyclothymes

Psychaesthesia and mood

Diathetic proportion: between raised (gay) and depressed (sad)

Psychic tempo

Wavy temperamental curve: between mobile and comfortable

Psychomotility

Adequate to stimulus, rounded, natural, smooth

Schizothymes

Psychaesthetic proportion:-- between hyperaesthetic (sensitive) and anaesthetic (cold)

Jerky temperamental curve: between unstable and tenacious alternation mode of thought and feeling

Often inadequate to stimulus: restrained, lamed, inhibited, stiff, etc.

Physical
affinities

Pyknic

Asthenic, athletic, dysplastic,
and their mixtures

The temperaments, then, separate off into the two great constitutional groups, the cyclothymes and the schizothymes. Inside the two main groups there is a further dual division, according as the cyclothymic temperament is habitually more on the gay or sad side, and according as the schizothymic temperament tends towards the sensitive or the cold pole. An indefinite number of individual temperamental shades emerge from the psychaesthetic and diathetic proportions, i.e., from the manner in which in the same type of temperament, the polar opponents displace one another, overlay one another, or relieve one another in alternation. Besides asking about the proportions of any given temperament, we must at the same time ask about its dispositions, i.e., about the tone which the particular type of temperament which dominates has got from extraneous mixtures in heredity.

This wealth of shades is further enlarged by variations in the psychic tempo. Hence, at any rate as far as cyclothymes are concerned, we have the empirical fact that the more gay are usually the more mobile, while those who belong to the moderate class with an inclination to depression, are usually more comfortable and slow. This we should expect from long clinical experience of the close connection between bright excitability, swift flights of ideas, and psychomotor facility as manic symptoms, and in melancholic symptomatology the connection of depression and inhibition of thought and will. And among healthy cyclothymic temperaments a certain mood-disposition usually goes with a certain psychic tempo, so that gayness and mobility are often bound up with the hypomanic type of temperament, and a tendency to depression and slowness with the melancholic type.

But on the other hand such fixed relations between psychaesthesia and definite psychic rhythms are not to be recognised in the schizothyme, in that with the tender hyperaesthetics we often find astonishing tenacity in feeling and will, and, vice versa, capricious instability with people of pronouncedly cold indolence. So that in the schizothymic circle we often meet with all four combinations: sensitive as well as cold tenacity, and jerky sensitivity as well as capricious indolence.

Individual differentiations of the schizothymic temperaments we have already described in detail. The hyperaesthetic qualities manifest themselves empirically chiefly as tender sensibility, sensitivity to nature and art, tact and taste in personal style, sentimental affection for certain individuals, hypersensitivity and vulnerability with regard to the daily irritations of life, and finally, in the coarsened types, and particularly in post-psychotics and their equivalents, we find it in the shape of passion working in combination with 'complexes'. The anaesthetic qualities of schizothymes are manifested in the form of cutting, active coldness, or passive insensitivity, as a canalisation of interest into well-defined autistic directions, as indifference, or unshakable equilibrium. Their jerkiness is now rather indolent instability, and now caprice; their tenacity takes on the most varied shapes: steely energy, stubborn willfulness, pedantry, fanaticism, logical systematism in thought and action.

The variations of the diathetic temperament are far fewer, if we leave out the strongly flavoured dispositions (the querulous, the quarrelsome, the anxious, and the dry hypochondriacs). The hypomanic type besides the ordinary gay mood-disposition, also manifests as passionate jollity,. It varies between the quickly flaring up fiery temperament, the energetic sweeping practical elan, being very variously occupied, and being equable, sunny, and bright.

Cyclothymic psychomotility is distinguished by the natural quality of reaction and bodily movement, which is now quick, now slow, but (apart from severe pathological inhibitions) always rounded and adequate to the stimulus. While among schizothymes we often meet with psychomotor peculiarities, and particularly in the

lack of adequate immediacy between psychic stimulus and motor reaction, in the form of aristocratic, reserved, very restrained, or affectively-lamed, or finally occasionally inhibited, stiff, or timid motility.

In their complex attitudes and reactions to environment the cyclothymics are in the main men with a tendency to throw themselves into the world about them, and the present, of open, sociable, spirited, kind-hearted, and 'naturally-immediate' natures, whether they seem at one time more jolly, or at another cautious, comfortable and melancholic. There emerges from them, among others, the everyday type of energetic practical man, and the sensual enjoyer of life. Among the more gifted members of the class, we find the broad expansive realists, and the good-natured, hearty humorists when we come to artistic style; the types of observant, describing, and fingering empiricist, and the man who wants to popularise science for the laity, when we come to scientific mode of thought; and in practical life the well-meaning, understanding conciliator, the energetic organiser on a large scale, and the tough, strong-minded whole-hogger.

The attitude towards life of the schizoid temperament, on the other hand, has a tendency to autism, to a life inside oneself, to the construction of a narrowly-defined individual zone, of an inner world of dreams and principles which is set up against things as they really are, of an acute opposition of 'I' and 'the world', a tendency to an indifferent or sensitive withdrawal from the mass of one's fellow-men, or a cold flitting about among them without regard to them and without *rapport* with them. Among them we find, in the first place, an enormous number of defective types, or sulky eccentrics, egoists, unstable idlers, and criminals; among the socially valuable types we find the sensitive enthusiast, the world-hostile idealist, the simultaneously tender and cold, formal aristocrat. In art and poetry we find them as stylistically pure formal artists and classicists, as romanticists flying the world, and sentimental idyllics, as tragic pathetics and so on to the extremes of expressionism and tendentious naturalism, and finally as witty ironists and sarcastics. In their scientific method of thought we find a preference for academic formalism or philisophical reflexion, for mystical metaphysics, and exact schematism. And, lastly, of the types which are suitable for active life, the schizothymes seem to produce in particular the tenacious energetics, the inflexible devotees of principle and logic, the masterful natures, the heroic moralists, the pure idealists, the fanatics and despots, and the diplomatic, supple, cold calculators.

Let us group these special dispositions, which have been dealt with in more detail in Chapter III, according to the way in which our investigations have shown them to belong biologically, into a table, but with the proviso that the table only includes the plus-variants of social value, and only the most important of these, so that it only contains a part of the total temperamental group.

SPECIAL DISPOSITIONS

	<i>Cyclothymes</i>	<i>Schizothymes</i>
Poets	Realists Humorists	Pathetics Romantics Formalists
Experimenters	Observers Describers Empiricists	Exact logicians Systematists Metaphysicians
Leaders	Tough whole-hoggers Jolly organisers Understanding conciliators	Pure idealists Despots and fanatics Cold calculators

Our task is concluded. If at many points we have only been able to give glimpses and suppositions, and not satisfactory conclusions, it is due to the size of the problem, which presses on indefinitely into the depths of biology and psychological science. Here and there, when the material was not sufficient for ultimate proof, we have had to sketch in suggestions between the facts of which we were certain. We did not do this in order to arrive at a premature conclusion, but to get co-operation, to offer a starting-point for possible trains of thought and investigation in the various sciences involved. Through such sympathetic correction and co-operation on the part of technical investigators many points of view may be obtained not only for medical and anthropological purposes, but in particular for general psychology, and for the answering of certain aesthetic, literary, and historical questions. If we are successful in the application of this form of natural history and biological modes of thought to provinces of the psychic life which were hitherto foreign to it, and if on the other hand it is possible for clinicists and biologists to get a broad view over the problems of psychology from a well-grounded point of vantage, so that they can see problems which must hitherto have appeared too subjective, vague, and misty, then along these lines we shall have helped in the advance towards the firm synthetic articulation of the entire field of modern thought (pp. 258-62).

Kretschmer, Ernst. (1925). *Physique and Character: an investigation of the nature of constitution and of the theory of temperament*. trans. W. J. H. Spott. New York: Harcourt Brace.

From: <http://www.ptypes.com/temperaments.html>