

## **Teacher Education Institute (TEI)**

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### **Temperament Melancholic**

In many ways children of melancholic temperament possess qualities which are the polar opposites to those possessed by children with choleric temperaments. Melancholics will usually be of slight build; their facial expressions can vary from the greatest discontent to the noblest sorrow. Even if their egotistic tendencies are overcome they will still bear the mark of deep seriousness; they will rarely show spontaneous delight.

Melancholic children may well have an appearance of tired resignation about them and appear to be apathetic and indifferent. This can easily occur when things go wrong or an upset occurs. The energy of melancholics is partly directed outwards and partly inwards. When things are going well the energy goes outwards. In these situations they are sensitive to the needs of others and are relatively easy to handle.

When things go wrong the melancholics energy can quickly change direction. They possess a tendency towards introversion and it takes very little to upset them. If that happens the child can suddenly turn from a happy outgoing child to one who is withdrawn.

The disposition towards introversion can easily become unhealthy. They can very easily become sorry for themselves and their egotistical nature may well show itself in unjustifiable but persistent demands for pity, sympathy and understanding.

Melancholics take life very seriously and it is pointless trying to cultivate a light-hearted approach to life. They are slow adjusters and they do not like to make quick decisions but will want to consider all aspects of the problem or situation.

It may well be thought that they lack the ability to think positively and decisively in the short run but it is more a case of wanting to see all sides of the question. They do, however, lack confidence going into new situations or new sets of circumstances and full consideration should be taken of this. They will avoid risks wherever possible; they can easily become persistent worriers and become oppressed by their own worries.

Melancholics, in the first stage of child development, rarely move beyond the thoughts of their own little world. They may demand attention to an excessive degree and if things are not going right, have a pessimistic attitude towards the world.

They need encouragement to raise themselves beyond their own introverted tendencies. This should happen in the second stage and teachers have a responsibility to see that they move beyond the first egocentric stage of thinking.

In the third stage melancholics can rise above their own doubts and apprehension. They may well have more to give at this stage than the other temperaments. Many will obtain great satisfaction in helping others and appreciating they do have much to give provided they can overcome their egotistical nature.

As we have seen many melancholics have much to give. Many will choose nursing, teaching, social work and similar types of occupation where they can obtain satisfaction in their relationships with others whom they can help. Many other melancholics will be of a sensitive and artistic nature and will be attracted to jobs which involve the creative and artistic.