



The Temperament God Gave Your Kids: Motivate, Discipline, and Love Your Children

Art Bennett , Laraine Bennett

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Do you have a child who is into everything? Your energetic, bubbly child is often the center of attention and sometimes in the middle of trouble! Or perhaps you have a child who is just the opposite: quiet, studious, and slow to warm up in social situations.

Art and Laraine Bennett provide an accessible synthesis of classical wisdom, modern counseling, science, Catholic spirituality, and wonderful storytelling to the four basic temperaments that serve as the foundation of one's personality and approach to life. This is the authors third book on the topic of temperaments, sharing not only their professional expertise but also their personal life experiences. They have been married for thirty-four years and have four children one each of the four temperament types!

The Temperament God Gave Your Kids: Motivate, Discipline, and Love Your Children Details

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From Reader Review The Temperament God Gave Your Kids: Motivate, Discipline, and Love Your Children for online ebook

Janet says

One of my overriding questions is who came up with those category names? The book looks at the 4 different temperament types and how the parents' temperaments and the child's temperaments interact.

CHOLERIC

Cholerics people are leaders and directors. They seek to be in control of situations, to be on top, to be the best. They word things with confidence and certainty. They would say "X is this way" versus a phlegmatic who might say "maybe X is this way, or something?" If met by opposition, they react confrontationally to defend themselves. They are constantly trying to be dominant in every situation, subconsciously, either by being louder and better than those around them, or more restrained and therefore superior to those who lose their cool. Most bullies are Choleric, but few Cholerics are bullies. Many will in fact stand up to those who bully others, rather than letting them get away with things. If met by opposition, they react confrontationally to defend themselves. They are constantly trying to be 'dominant' in every situation, subconsciously, either by being louder and better than those around them, or more restrained and therefore superior to those who lose their cool.

Cholerics are extroverted in the sense that they will meddle in others' affairs and 'speak their mind' if they feel it is necessary, rather than minding their own business. They will plough through obstacles that bar their path (metaphorically speaking); they are single-minded in moving towards their goals. They have similarities to the melancholic in that both are stubborn and opinionated, but the choleric is more forceful and 'tough' while the melancholic is uncertain and sensitive. Cholerics strive for independence, because to be dependent is to rely on others, to not be in the superior position. Dependence is weakness.

MELANCHOLIC

They are tenacious and cannot let things go, because 'good enough' is not good enough. They strive for perfection. They do not go with the flow. It's easier for them to reject and hate things than it is for them to love and embrace them. Their interests and tastes are picked carefully, and they give a lot of attention to each one, and hold them close to their hearts, rather than having many fleeting interests that change quickly and often.

They argue using reason, evidence, logic, and explanations, delivered analytically or with pleading. They only argue to set wrongs right, rather than to assert dominance. The argument is about the issue, not about them. Melancholics are the most introverted of the temperaments in that they crave time alone, and are most at ease in their own company. They can enjoy spending time with others, but this drains their energy, and they need alone time in order to recharge. Many Melancholics wish to learn and to understand, to know the details of every little thing, because to be ignorant is to stray from perfection. They are not content to just accept things the way that they are. They are inquisitive and ask specific questions in order to come to a clearer understanding.

SANGUINE

Sanguine people are boisterous, bubbly, chatty, openly emotional, social extroverts. The more people they're surrounded by, the better they feel, and they're not picky about who they get to know. They enjoy having

many, many friends. While Sanguines enjoy being around other people, it's largely because they enjoy the attention of others and feel good about the fact that they are not lonely. They are talkers more than they are listeners. They may move away from friends that they consider to be boring or dull. They enjoy social situations, and believe that everyone else would too. They're likely to convince people to come along with things like 'come on, you'll enjoy it!' or 'you don't know what you're missing!' Being friends with a Sanguine is often as simple as knowing each other's face and name.

Sanguines can be great motivators, as they'll enthusiastically encourage others towards action, and they see things positively, optimistically, and would convince others to see things that way too. They are naturally physical with others, very 'touchy-feely', openly expressing their affection through hugs and stroking and grabbing shoulders and things like that. They could not be said to be neat and tidy. They live in the moment, which can lead to poor planning or disorganization, messiness. They require constant entertainment, and will complain about being bored if they are not sufficiently entertained, often at another person who's failing to entertain them. They will show off their abilities to others in order to get praise. They are dramatic, and will exaggerate to make things seem more extreme than they are.

PHLEGMATIC

Phlegmatic people are meek, submissive introverts who live to please others. They take the path of least resistance whenever possible. They so desperately wish for peace, for everyone to get along, and to avoid conflict at all costs. Conflict terrifies them. They do not start it (except perhaps in extreme circumstances), or provoke it, and try to defuse it when it comes up. When forced into an argument, they get very upset and distressed, seeking escape rather than victory. They are well-behaved; rebelling against established rules would feel deeply uncomfortable to them. They're the sort who'd say, worriedly, 'should we really be doing this?' or 'we might get in trouble!' They really, really do not wish to be a bother to others, and always put others first. This is due to a deep-rooted unease about asserting themselves rather than a lack of confidence, or a conscious desire to be a 'nice person'.

They are quick to apologize for any mistakes that they may have made, and will sacrifice their own happiness to ensure that others are happy. They are empathetic, and acutely aware of the feelings of those that they are interacting with, as they do not wish to hurt these feelings. They have tremendous difficulty saying no, and will go along with things that they dislike to make others happy. They'll defer to others to make choices, and will feel upset and pressured if they have to make a decision themselves; this comes from their inability to see themselves in a 'leader' role. They are natural followers and work best when they are told what to do. Phlegmatics are introverted, and enjoy time alone. However, they are much nicer and more friendly and social than the melancholic, as they're unburdened by 'perfectionism' and as such do not judge others. They enjoy spending time with friends, and are very loyal to these friends, sticking with them through thick and thin, even through abuse. This is because they put others first, and will not leave another even if THEY want to because the other person may not want them to leave. They are almost immune to anger. They have extremely long fuses, and will only snap after a long period of prolonged and persistent abuse. Even then, they're more likely to retreat within themselves and cry than to try to harm another.

<http://temperaments.fighunter.com/?pa...>

P.S. Apparently Galen (AD 131–200) developed came up with the names of the categories. The word "temperament" itself comes from Latin "temperare", "to mix". Galen named them "sanguine, choleric, melancholic and "phlegmatic" after the bodily humors, respectively.

Karishma says

I bought this book after attending a talk by Laraine Bennett at the IHM homeschooling conference. I think that colored my experience of it because there was so much overlap between the talk and the book. It is fascinating material, and definitely useful to identify your own temperament and that of the people around you, in particular your kids.

I was hoping for even more practical advice on how to parent kids of various temperaments, though. More nuts and bolts stuff rather than philosophical/psychological ideas. But that could just be a weakness of my melancholic temperament...

Kim says

Loved this book! Great examples and suggestions. Also great for understanding your partners parenting style.

Rachel says

I want to give this 3.5 stars because it's somewhere between I liked it and really liked it. Many of the tips given for parenting specific temperaments are solid for just about any child, I thought. I had a hard time identifying my temperament with the parent temperaments described. I loved how the author's reference a lot of saints, their temperaments, and how they cultivated certain virtues that didn't necessarily come naturally to their temperament.

Vicky says

I just skimmed a lot of it, but it did give really good insight into one of my children.

Britt, Book Habitue says

This is actually a Catholic parenting book that I picked up out of amusement. The sections titled "Your Moody Melancholic Moppet" and "Your Spirited Sanguine Sprout" cracked me up. I didn't really intend to read it, mostly I just thought the wording was awesome.

Turns out-- I really found it to be a thought-provoking and useful parenting book. It was interesting to look at my children's personalities in terms of the 4 temperament categories they use.

I'm not Catholic, so parts of the book didn't speak as much to me, but turns out there's a lot of common ground in terms of faith-- we (I'm LDS) just use different vocabulary and don't revere saints as divine.

Overall, recommended.

Marissa says

A bit repetitive but useful.

Patti says

This is a great resource for parents to help identify their children's natural strengths and weaknesses in order to best aid their growth into well adjusted, virtuous adults. The best parts, in my opinion, were the discussion of common parenting pitfalls in dealing especially with the weaknesses of each temperament (including resisting the potential urge to think something is "wrong" with a child different than them), the plans of action to best love and affirm each child, even if it doesn't come naturally, and practical ideas for helping each unique child grow in virtue to be who God created them to be. My only complaint is that the discussion of how your temperament as a parent plays out seemed fairly one-dimensional (i.e. the choleric parent expects self motivation, the melancholic parent is always the law, etc.). Rather, I believe there is a lot more richness to parenting with a certain temperament, just like there is complexity to each child. I wish this was discussed more, but alas, it was a short book!

Shaunda Penny says

After resisting reading something like this for a long time, I ordered this book after a friend suggested learning about temperaments might help me with one of my particularly difficult children. I am so thankful I did! The book really helped me better understand all of my children, their strengths and weaknesses and how I can help them to become the person God is calling them to be by working WITH their temperament not against it. I would highly recommend this book to all parents who sometimes wonder "What is up with that kid????", especially parents of large families where the variety of temperaments can make discipline and motivation especially challenging. While the book is definitely Catholic, it contains a wealth of information that is exceptionally helpful to all parents regardless of what your beliefs are. I read this in only 2 days and am looking forward to going back through it and taking notes on how to best work with each of my children. :)

Kristie Racanelli says

This book was excellent. I certainly have a mix of temperaments in my children. Understanding them and my own temperament will very much help our relationships and communication.

Anna says

I liked this book, it was hugely informative, but felt it lacked specific examples (which is what I was hoping

for) and written for older-than-my kids (5, 3, 2). I'll be keeping to reference later.

Dani Evans says

This is a good quick read and a great starting point for seeing each child 's baseline. It also helped me see mine and then we can learn how to build each other up. Great book!

Julie Berst says

This is a book I wish I had read 10 years ago. Instead always thinking "something's wrong" with your children, or assuming they're being naughty, much of behavior has to do with the type of temperament your child was blessed with. This book comes with great ideas to deal with balancing temperamental tendencies in both your child and yourself, how to help your child build up virtues, curb bad habits, and identifying which temperament your child has. Understanding your children's and your temperaments could be the key to a peaceful home.

Sarah S says

Why does one child have a huge meltdown after a social outing, while another child is energized and happy? Why is it so easy to get one child to pick up toys, but another child immediately starts an argument about it? This book provided many helpful insights into these common parenting struggles. It helped me diagnose each of my children's temperaments based on their typical behaviors. Knowing a person's temperament is like knowing what operating system is installed on a computer. While the OS doesn't fully define the system, it does dominate the day-to-day experience of interacting with the computer.

All parents of multiple children know that what works for one child doesn't necessarily work for everyone. It's not that you need different standards for each child, but rather, that each child has different natural strengths, and may need different motivational tactics to face his/her own "tough stuff." This book offered several useful tips to help navigate the challenging aspects of each temperament. The section that explores parent-child temperament interactions (example, choleric parent and melancholy child) was also enlightening, and illuminated the cause of many battles I have with one of my children.

Five stars: useful material, easy to read, short and to the point.

Melissa says

I have been interested in the 4 temperaments for several years. I first heard about the temperaments when I was in college and I heard a nun give a wonderful talk about them. After that I was so intrigued that I read as much as I could on the temperaments. I find them fascinating. I think they are a huge help when wanting to better understand yourself and the people in your life... whether those people be your spouse, children, co-workers, employees, etc...

I bought this book after having my fourth baby; feeling like I needed a refresher course on the topic. However, I was disappointed with the book. I felt like the authors more or less based this book on their children's experiences whether or not those experiences were relevant to the topic. Like forcing a puzzle-piece into the wrong space. They have 4 children. Coincidentally... "one of each temperament"? Don't get me wrong... I like the "real-life" example as much as the next person... but a lot of times I felt that the examples they used to illustrate a temperament were not cohesive with the details they used to describe that very same temperament. So as a reader, I was often times left feeling that the lines between the temperaments were very blurry.

A lot of the content seemed to be something teenagers would find appealing rather than the obvious audience they are targeting: parents! The authors use a lot of analogies in their book. Again... I'm a fan of a good analogy if it conveys the point you are trying to make. However, I felt that many of their comparisons were distracting. I found myself thinking: "How is that relevant?" It had a "dumbing-down" effect; quoting Winnie the Pooh and referencing Taylor Swift.

I did not appreciate how the authors interjected their own personal feelings about each temperament. Projecting a biased point-of-view onto the reader. As if one temperament was better than all the rest. "Ah, the beauty of a Phlegmatic child [...] If this child is your first, know that you are blessed." (pg.85) They say nice things about the other temperaments as well, but are not nearly as glowing as when talking about the Phlegmatic. Even the phlegmatic's vices appear to be blessings in this book. Then they say stuff like: "Parents of sanguines will tell you (with a heavy sigh) that these children need to learn by experience." (pg. 159) Why the sigh? Depending on a parent's temperament... they may prefer the hands-on child to the hands-off child. I found the authors' writing less credible due to all of the personal assertions. I prefer the facts. No sugar-coating. Your temperament is God given... and all temperaments are equal in this regard. God has blessed each individual with the temperament that is most suited to them!

The last chapter of this book was its saving grace. This chapter flowed well. And it was cram-packed with lots of helpful insights. The authors outlined the virtues and vices of each temperament. They offered specific ideas on how to help children work on growing in virtue and curbing their bad habits. They gave examples of different Saints that were of each temperament, which I found inspirational. Everything leading up to this last chapter was fluff in comparison.

Overall... I think if you have not been exposed to much information on the 4 temperaments you may find this an informational book. But if you are looking for additional resources on this topic... skip this book.

Instead, I would recommend the short book, "The 4 Temperaments" by: Fr. Conrad Hock
(Which the authors actually cite quite a bit.)

Or my personal favorite and quite comprehensive: "The 4 Temperaments CD's" by: Mother Mary Bosco of the Daughters of Mary.
