

Class Outline



I. Disposition and Habits / Temperaments and Personality

A. Disposition

1. Each faculty has a proper object.
2. Sometimes the faculty relates well to its object and sometimes it does not.
3. A disposition resides in the faculty and determines whether the faculty will act or be acted upon by its object well (with facility) or poorly (the action is difficult).

For example, some people have an appetite that is more disposed towards its operation or toward its object than others.

4. So the disposition affects the relationship the particular faculty has to its object and as a result affects the appetites and passions.
5. Dispositions become habituated. So the term disposition can refer to a habit insofar as a habit disposes the faculty toward a specific object well or poorly. But there is a difference:
 - Habit implies a certain long duration – it is a quality
 - Disposition has to do with the arrangement of matter – it is an inclination; it is primarily inherited. Also referred to as temperament.

B. Habits

Habits are:

- 1 A stable disposition inclining rightly or wrongly to some end.

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- 2 A quality whereby that which is disposed well or poorly either regarding self or to another.
- 3 A deep, ingrained characteristic.
- 4 Are what we become. We are configured to the choices we make and the activities we choose; we become disposed to a way of being.
- 5 Not neutral – some make us good (virtue); some make us evil (vice)

C. Important points re: temperament/disposition:

1. Every person has a different temperament which inclines him to different virtues or vices.
2. Temperament is principally inherited or naturally endowed.
3. Temperament, since it is a disposition, is changeable. Changes occur due to development of certain virtues or vices, as well as inherited or environmental factors.
4. People develop their personalities and moral character according to their temperament.
5. Most people don't act contrary to their disposition because it is arduous (due to effects of original sin and disordered appetites).

D. The Four Temperaments or Dispositions

1. The pattern of inclinations and reactions that proceed from the physiological constitution of the individual, which includes emotional and intellectual inclinations regarding judgments.
2. They are based upon physiological constitution or based upon the material disposition of the person.
 - a. So any patterns of intellectual judgment that are tied to the temperament would be those based upon the material disposition of the person.
 - b. This material disposition affects everything from the operations of the passive intellect to the operations of the appetites.
3. There are four dispositions / temperaments:
 - a. Sanguine
 - b. Choleric
 - c. Melancholic
 - d. Phlegmatic
4. The primary considerations in determining one's temperament:
 - a. Do I react immediately and vehemently or slowly and superficially to a strong impression made upon me?
 - b. Am I inclined to act at once or to remain calm and to wait?
 - c. Does the excitement last for a long time or only for a short while?
 - d. Another very practical way, ask these questions:
 - o Can I forgive when offended?
 - o Do I bear grudges and resent insults?

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E. Personality

The sum/total of the actualities (perfections) and potencies of a given person; hence, one's physical, mental, and emotional traits, habits, qualities, and their external expression. There are some which we have control over and some we do not.

1. Four causes of personality
 - a. Volitional acts - principal part of personality is character
 - b. Inheritance - disposition & bodily constitution (temperament)
 - c. Intellectual habits - education & intellectual formation
 - d. Circumstances in life – environment

2. Character
 - a. Those aspects of personality which fall under volitional control, when taken together.
 - b. The habitual moral virtues and vices of a person founded on his dispositions and together distinguishing his moral personality; integration of a person's nature and nurture in his habits and the expression of these in his living.
 - c. Character is an important factor in one's mental health and one's mental resilience

3. Perception of Personality
 - a. The exterior actions are the means by which the person's character is known and consequently one's personality.
 - b. A way of knowing interior life of a person.
 - c. Personality is the sum/total of the accidents of a person.

OVERVIEW OF THE FOUR DISPOSITIONS / TEMPERAMENTS

THE SANGUINE DISPOSITION

Sanguine disposition: inclinations

- React quickly & strongly
- But not permanently
- Reaction lasts a short time
- Positive passions of the concupiscible appetite predominate - love, desire, delight
- Tend to be optimistic – prone to the passion of hope

Positive sanguine traits

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| • Imaginative | • Joyful |
| • Light-hearted | • Friendly |
| • Vivacious | • Pleasant |

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- Agreeable
- Loving
- Compassionate
- Docile
- Candid
- Sincere
- Spontaneous
- Cheerful
- React vehemently to injuries
- But quickly forgets or recovers from offenses
- Tends not to hold rancor or be obdurate in evil

Negative sanguine traits

- Superficiality
- Instability
- Inconstancy
- Hasty in judgment
- Dislike reflection & contemplative life
- Tend to be loquacious
- Dislikes loneliness
- Prone to vanity
- Enjoy flattery
- Tend toward envy
- Predominate fault centers around sensuality
- Prone to lust & gluttony
- Ready to undertake anything but quickly discouraged
- Tend to rely on feelings in matters of religion

Psychological counsel for sanguine disposition

- Encourage to develop traits that are in accord with disposition
 - Obedience-since docile by nature
 - Cheerfulness & candor
- Develop virtues contrary to nature
 - Modesty, temperance, chastity, and detachment (curbs sensuality/vanity/envy)
 - Virtue of silence (curbs loquaciousness)
 - Prayer & reflection (helps with detachment and hasty judgment)
 - Daily mortification of senses (custody of eyes, ears, tongue, touch)
- Guard against overindulgence-food & drinks
- Because he is prone to please others - avoid influence of bad company
- Accept counsel & spiritual direction
- Adopt regimen for daily life - more structure and less prone to inconstancy of life of appetites
- Taught to engage consistently in self-denial
- Persevere at the work
- Observance of order continually encouraged
- Allow positive traits to be exercised – but in moderation

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CHOLERIC DISPOSITION

Choleric disposition: inclinations

- Quick to react, reaction remains a long time
- Liable to strong passions
- Proneness to anger
- Prone to despair
- Predominance of passions of irascible appetites
- Tend to react favorably to reason & high ideas
- Practical vs. theoretical, inclined to work more than think, inactivity is repugnant to them.

Positive choleric traits

- Keen intellect
- Great powers of concentration & endurance
- High ideals
- Strong will
- Tend to constancy & generosity
- Capable leaders

Negative choleric traits

- Stubbornness
- Impatience
- Proud
- Sensitive to humiliations as they tend to be proud
- Tend to domineering
- Characterized by a certain hardness
- Because of pride and self-will, tends to deceit & hypocrisy
- Tends to lack compassion and sympathy for fellow man – shows contempt with mocking or belittling remarks

Psychological counsel for choleric disposition

- Encourage developing the virtues of:
 - Fortitude & magnanimity (which accord to his disposition)
- Contrary to his disposition, he should be encouraged to develop:
 - Humility/opposite of pride & anger
 - Meekness/opposite of anger
 - Kindness & charity/opposite of inclinations to be domineering, despising others & hardness
- Moderate & direct goals according to order of charity
 - Directs desire for high ideals, nobility & practical side
- Encourage dependency on God & humble beg assistance to overcome depending on self
- Encourage him to humble self & ask assistance of fellow man
- Consider others not self – pursue charity
- Prone to mental illness rooted in solipsism
- Turn outward with proper direction

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- Regimen of humility, frequent & daily recitation of the litany of humility, reading books on humility & foster an acceptance of humiliation
- Seek to develop strong devotion to Sacred Heart of Jesus for meekness and humility
- Encourage to meditate on the sufferings of others, especially those he causes
- Meditate on the sufferings of Christ & his patience without acrimony
- Psychologist should maintain calm
 - Do not become angry with directee, be realistic about what they can accomplish

MELANCHOLIC DISPOSITION

Melancholic disposition: inclinations

- Predominate inclination is toward sorrow
- Inclined toward the negative passions of the concupiscible appetite (sorrow, hatred, flight)
- Tend to be pessimistic
- Desires delight in order to expel sorrow
- Reacts slowly but permanently to what they experience
- Tend not to forget easily
- Have a tenderness and generosity for friends
- Are not at home in crowd
- Passive & not vivacious, quick or progressive

Positive melancholic traits

- Contemplative or inclined toward reflection & interior life
- Sympathetic & compassionate
- Long suffering though fearful of suffering and dread of interior exertion & self-denial

Negative melancholic traits

- Tend to surrender easily
- Overly serious
- Too reserved except with close friends since difficult to reveal self
- Inclined to be irresolute & dreamy
- Concentrate excessively on themselves
- sorrow, fear, aversion, despondency & despair
- Suspicious
- Tend toward scruples, despondency, and pusillanimity
- Tends to complexity
- Predominate faults -

Psychological counsel for melancholic disposition

- Encourage to develop virtues in accord with disposition
 - Spirit of prayer-inclined to interior life
 - Detachment and spirit of mercy
- Encourage virtues that are contrary to disposition
 - Joyous attitude (obtained through custody of the mind which does not allow depressing & sad thoughts into imagination)
 - Work on fortitude -- makes more sociable & steadfast in resolve
 - Develop charity & hope

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- Counselor to keep in mind
 - Must have a sympathetic understanding of melancholic
 - Temperament & personality complex & difficult to discern
 - Have a good knowledge of melancholic temperament and how it manifests
 - Gain confidence of directee
 - Give good example through unselfish & sincere concern for his well being
 - Be encouraging & not rude, harsh, or hard
 - Encourage to be busy about beneficial activities e.g., work, hobbies –to keep mind off sorrow
 - Take care not to weaken nerves as sensitive nature is prone to break downs
 - Be kind & friendly
 - Take care in verbal chastisement to avoid obstinacy
 - Remonstrations with caution and great kindness

PHLEGMATIC DISPOSITION

Phlegmatic disposition: inclinations

- Hallmarked by placidity, tranquility & quiet
- React slowly and not permanently
- Devoid of strong passions

Positive phlegmatic traits

- Work slowly but assiduously
- Not easily irritated by insults, misfortunes, or sickness
- Usually remain tranquil, discreet & sober
- Have a great deal of common sense & mental balance
- Do not possess:
 - Inflammable passions of sanguine
 - Deep passions of melancholic
 - Ardent passions of choleric
- In speech: orderly, clear, positive & measured vs. florid & picturesque
- rather than attack
- Physically of robust build, slow in movements and amiable face
- More suited to scientific work which involves long patient research and minute investigation
- Have good hearts but seem cold
- Would sacrifice to point of heroism if necessary
- Lack enthusiasm and spontaneity
- Prudent, sensible, reflective & work with a measured pace
- Attain their goals without fanfare or violence
- Usually avoid difficulties

Negative traits

- Passive
- Can be inconstant

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- Demand little & get along due to lack of conviction
- Tend to incline toward ease & comfort
- Tend to be unambitious, procrastinators & disinterested
- Faults: dullness & sloth

Psychological counsel for phlegmatic disposition

- Develop virtues of patience, affability & perseverance
- Develop virtues contrary to their disposition:
 - Develop zeal & temperance
 - Develop deep convictions to overcome disposition
 - Must confront prudently to motivate to overcome illness & negative aspects of temperament

Notes

Introduction to the Science of Mental Health, Volume 1, Chapter 10: Habits, Virtues, Vices, pp 199-205 and Volume 3, Chapter 15: Temperaments or Disposition, pp 645-660 ... personality

References

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Recording

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