

GRETCHEN RUBIN'S FOUR TENDENCIES

for Parents, Teachers, and Coaches

UPHOLDERS

- They're self-directed, so they can finish their homework, bring their gym clothes, or feed a fish without much supervision.
- They're eager to meet expectations and may become uneasy when it's not clear what's expected—e.g., when an assignment is unclear.
- They embrace routine and may struggle to adjust to sudden scheduling changes.
- They can seem uptight or rigid.

QUESTIONERS

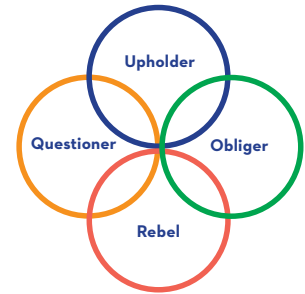
- They put a high value on reason, research, information, and efficiency. They need robust explanations to meet expectations—not “Because I say so” or “Sophomores always do this assignment.”
- They follow an “authority” only if they respect that person.
- Their persistent questioning may make them seem uncooperative or disrespectful.
- They often refuse to do tasks that strike them as pointless or arbitrary—“Writing a book summary is a waste of time, but I'll study for the test because I'm actually learning.”

OBLIGERS

- They require supervision, deadlines, monitoring, and other forms of accountability.
- Many small deadlines often work better than one big distant deadline.
- They must have systems of external accountability in order to meet inner expectations—to study for the SAT or GRE, say, they should take a class or work with a tutor.
- Parents, teachers, and professors should ensure that work is distributed fairly so that Obligers aren't exploited by others during group work.

REBELS

- They put a high value on freedom, choice, and self-expression; they can do anything they want to do. They resist specific assignments, routines, schedules, and repetitive tasks.
- If someone asks or tells them to do something, they're less likely to do it—so they resist supervision, advice, nagging, or reminders.
- They may act as though ordinary rules don't apply to them; for instance, they complete an assignment in their own way.
- To inspire a Rebel to act, it's most effective to appeal to their identity, or to use an information-consequence-choice framework when explaining a task.
- It's crucial that Rebel children be allowed to experience the negative consequences of their bad choices.



THE FOUR TENDENCIES

framework can help us understand children's perspectives and why they do what they do.

Learn more at
GretchenRubin.com

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Four Tendencies framework
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