

# 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

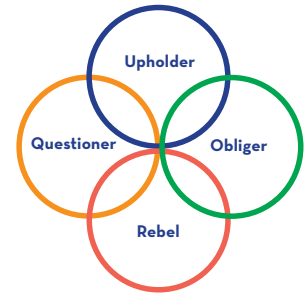
- They put a high value on reason, research, information, and efficiency. They need robust explanations to meet expectations—not “Because I say so” or “Sophomores always do this assignment.”
- They follow an “authority” only if they respect that person.
- Their persistent questioning may make them seem 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.

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