

# GRETCHEN RUBIN'S FOUR TENDENCIES at Work

## UPHOLDERS

- They're self-directed, so they meet deadlines and run projects without much supervision.
- They're eager to meet expectations (rules, regulations, performance targets) and may become uneasy when it's not clear what's expected.
- They embrace routine and may struggle to adjust to changes in scheduling or process.
- They may have trouble delegating, because they suspect that others aren't dependable.
- They may be judgmental of others who won't or don't meet expectations easily.
- They can seem uptight or rigid.

## QUESTIONERS

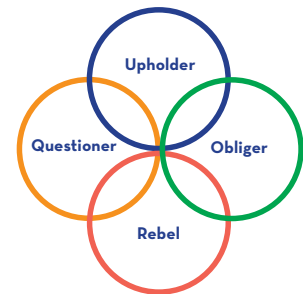
- They put a high value on reason, research, information, and efficiency.
- Managers should ensure that Questioners get the robust explanations they need to meet expectations—not “Because I say so” or “This is how we've always done it.”
- They follow an “authority” only if they respect that person.
- Because of their persistent questioning, others may view them as uncooperative, obstructionist, disrespectful, or “not a team player.”
- They often dislike being questioned themselves.
- They resist anything arbitrary—such as “The report can't be longer than twenty pages.”
- They can suffer “analysis-paralysis” when their desire for perfect information prevents them from being able to make a decision.

## OBLIGERS

- They put a high value on meeting commitments to others and going the extra mile—“I'll do anything for my client/team/customer.”
- They require supervision, deadlines, monitoring, and other forms of accountability.
- They may have trouble saying “no” or setting limits on others' demands.
- Managers should ensure that Obligers aren't exploited by others, that work is distributed fairly, and that Obligers take time off.

## REBELS

- They put a high value on freedom, choice, self-expression, and authenticity; they can do anything they *want* to do but will resist if someone tells them what to do.
- They may *choose* to act out of a sense of mission or a belief in a cause.
- They don't respond well to supervision, advice, reminders, or directions, and they resist routines, schedules, and repetitive tasks.
- If they have a work partner, that partner is probably an Obliger.
- They may act as though ordinary rules don't apply to them; this may be an advantage, for instance, in sales.
- They're often restless and may find it difficult to settle down in a job or particular office.
- To inspire a Rebel to act, it's most effective to appeal to their identity, or to use the framework of information-consequence-choice.
- Perhaps surprisingly, some Rebels are attracted to professions of high regulation such as police, clergy, the military, and big corporations.



When dealing with a boss, colleague, employee, client, or customer, we can use **THE FOUR TENDENCIES** to help us understand other people's perspectives and why they act the way they do.

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