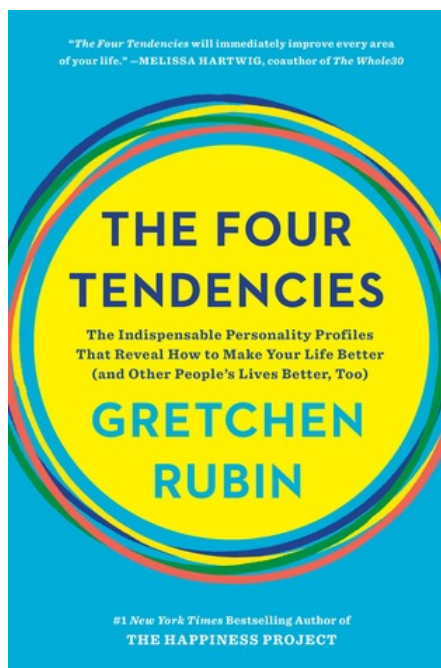




The Four Tendencies: The Indispensable Personality Profiles That Reveal How to Make Your Life Better (and Other People's Lives Better, Too)

Gretchen Rubin

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In this groundbreaking analysis of personality type, bestselling author of *Better Than Before* and *The Happiness Project*, Gretchen Rubin reveals the one simple question that will transform what you do at home, at work, and in life.

During her multibook investigation into understanding human nature, Gretchen Rubin realized that by asking the seemingly dry question "How do I respond to expectations?" we gain explosive self-knowledge. She discovered that based on their answer, people fit into Four Tendencies: Upholders, Questioners, Obligers, and Rebels. Our Tendency shapes every aspect of our behavior, so using this framework allows us to make better decisions, meet deadlines, suffer less stress, and engage more effectively.

More than 600,000 people have taken her online quiz, and managers, doctors, teachers, spouses, and parents already use the framework to help people make significant, lasting change.

The Four Tendencies hold practical answers if you've ever thought...

- People can rely on me, but I can't rely on myself.
- How can I help someone to follow good advice?
- People say I ask too many questions.
- How do I work with someone who refuses to do what I ask or who keeps telling me what to do?

With sharp insight, compelling research, and hilarious examples, *The Four Tendencies* will help you get happier, healthier, more productive, and more creative. It's far easier to succeed when you know what works for you.

The Four Tendencies: The Indispensable Personality Profiles That Reveal How to Make Your Life Better (and Other People's Lives Better, Too) Details

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From Reader Review The Four Tendencies: The Indispensable Personality Profiles That Reveal How to Make Your Life Better (and Other People's Lives Better, Too) for online ebook

Ness says

I snagged an ARC from my job at a public library. I knew a little bit about the four Tendencies before starting this book—mostly, that I am totally an Upholder—but not too much. I mostly enjoyed this book and the way it helps us both define others and give tips for living, working, and playing with them. Some of the examples didn't resonate with me, but overall, this is a good book for anyone who wants to know more about themselves and how to get the best out of themselves and others.

Katie says

I really liked this. I read it for my "learning time" at work and have been recommending it to my coworkers. ("Learning time" is a thing at my work in general--it's a library, after all!--and our new department goal is for each of us to get 24 hours of it a quarter. It finally occurred to me I could read for it!)

I've always had fun with personality quizzes and have spent hours of my life reading about my MBTI type (INTJ!), but this one was so great about learning about OTHER people. The idea here is your "tendency" has to do with whether you're motivated by and/or reject both "internal" and "external" expectations. I'm a Questioner, which means I'm motivated by internal expectations and reject the external ones. At first, I objected to that, but once I understood it more, yes! Actually, that sentence is probably a perfect explanation of a Questioner. I need to UNDERSTAND expectations and they need to make sense to me, so, essentially, I turn all expectations in internal ones.

Anyway, the real value here is that ongoing lesson that, "Other people aren't like me!" It makes me understand so much better where me and my coworker (hi Tracy :)) are coming from when we "fight" over work stuff.

I will probably buy this at some point.

Ashley says

I am a fan of Gretchen Rubin and her podcast. I am sad to say that this book was really disappointing. Her "Four Tendencies" was a cute idea in her book Better Than Before and I was hoping she would do actual research and collect real evidence to validate her theory. Sadly, this book is just a rehashing of her opinions and insights with no evidence or justification. Gretchen Rubin, perhaps, has not heard of confirmation bias? She only uses her own brilliant insights as proof of her tendencies. Hello? If you are looking through the lens with the 4 tendencies worldview you are going to find justification based on your worldview. She lacks basic understanding of the complex nature of psychological research and practice...it is starting to get on my nerves. I went from a fan to an annoyed, eye-rolling, critic. Conveniently, she categorizes anyone who questions the validity of her model as a "Questioner" and describes this as a quirk to get out of the tendencies. Well, Gretchen, perhaps you should address that question instead of skirting it entirely?

Donna says

I like this author. She has some great ideas for living happier. In this book, she deals with four different personality types: Upholders, Questioners, Obligers, and Rebels.

There was a test at the beginning to figure out which one you are. It wasn't that clear at the end of the test, which one was supposed to be my mother ship.....I still didn't know by the end of the book. But, I did like the understanding she offered when dealing with these different personality types. Overall, this didn't rock my world. I'd recommend this to those who are having difficulty with relationships in their life. They might gain some insight. So, 3 stars.

Ann says

I have sorta mixed feelings about the author. I have read and liked her other happiness/habit books. She has some good insights and is definitely interesting to read. There's something fulfilling about following someone else's personal journey and choosing tidbits that can help your life.

But in this book, I think she goes too far. In her other books, she's kinda been saying, "I did some research and I tried this stuff out myself. Here's how it worked and what you might try." This book, though, she's saying in essence, "I'm an expert now on personality (and relationships!), and here's how to do it. And oh yeah, no real actual research this time except stories of me telling people why I'm right."

She's not a therapist, a psychologist, a counselor, a relationship expert. But I think she sets herself up as if she is.

So here's what. This book was completely crushing to me. I am not exaggerating. I took her quiz and it told me I'm an obliger. Then I read her book. Basically it says,

Dear Obliger,

You can't do anything for yourself. This is your personality and you are stuck with it. You can't change or grow or improve to the point where you can actually choose to do something for your own self.

You can never be like me. I'm an upholder. I can do things for myself AND I can do things for other people. (Angels sing!)

But don't feel bad. Just accept that you will always be at the mercy of other people's expectations for you. You will always have to find someone (or many someone's) who doesn't mind holding up expectations for you every darn day of of your life so that you can function and get things done and try to find some modicum of dignity. Accept it. Work within this suffocating framework. It's not shameful! Aren't you happy you found this book and the wonderful ANSWERS I'm providing?

And don't worry about all that stuff I've said in here telling the other people in your life that you are theirs to manipulate at will because you can't help it. I'm sure that will always be good for you and your relationships.

I'm only trying to help!

Love,
the author

I think she's sincere, but I think she has no idea what she's really saying to people with this book.

I won't go on.

David says

There are numerous personality tests available, that rate your personality in one or more dimensions. I like the Myers Briggs test, that gauge your personality in four dimensions (I am an INTP type). This book bring to light a totally different dimension; the dimension of expectations. That is to say, do you respond to internal expectations, and do you respond to external expectations. So, there are four basic types:

Respond to internal and external expectations: Upholder

Respond to internal but not to external expectations: Questioner

Respond to external but not to internal expectations: Obliger

Respond to neither internal nor external expectations: Rebel

With this book, you can answer a simple set of questions, to determine your type. (I am an Upholder.) Then, you can learn about yourself, and by thinking about other people in your life--and perhaps by persuading them to try out the quiz--learn the types of others who you interact with. This book goes into great detail about how to deal with spouses, children, parents, bosses, employees, and any other type of relationship you can think of, depending on their personality type. These explanations go into considerable detail, for all four personality types.

The ideas in this book are simple--almost self-evident--but somehow they sound new and fresh to me. The book is initially fascinating, but after a while becomes quite repetitive. The book's structure lends itself to repetitiveness, and that is what made my interest peter off.

Stephanie Phillips says

Rubin herself says that she was clerking for a Supreme Court justice when she suddenly decided she wanted to be a writer. Not a researcher. A writer. And it shows she didn't want to be a researcher. That would be fine, unless you decide to come up with four personality types into which all of humanity can be divided, and then come up with a quiz and write a book based around your "framework," simply after having a self-described revelatory and insightful conversation with a friend.

No information on the reliability and validity of her quiz, which I assume is because she didn't bother with pesky things like basic research methods. And the fact that I'm even bringing this up will apparently be explained by the fact that I'm a "questioner," despite my being a "rebel" according to her own quiz. I was kinda hoping that, after forcing myself to finish this thing, the appendix might contain more info on the methodology and, to be blunt, any indication whatsoever that she didn't just pull all this out of thin air. No such luck. I can only assume the reason is that it doesn't exist.

Kelly 💜?? says

LOVED this book!!!

I'm a Gretchen Rubin super fan. I've read all her books & listen to her podcast. I was also lucky enough to meet her on the book tour for this book in September 2017. Thanks to the awesome independent bookstore Warwick's in La Jolla.

Gretchen briefly introduced the Four Tendencies in her previous book about habits, BETTER THAN BEFORE. This book takes it to a new level and explains each tendency in detail, analyzes the pros and cons, how the tendencies work together and how to deal with people based on their tendency.

I listened to the audio narrated by Gretchen herself. She is a great speaker and the audio was well done.

This book is so helpful to identify things that I'm doing in my own life and also to figure out why other people do things. I'm an Obliger married to a Questioner and now I finally understand his need to research everything to death and why he answers my questions with questions. I also can relate better with my Upholder & Rebel friends. Honestly, I've been using this framework in all facets of my life and I'm sure my family, friends and coworkers are tired of hearing about it... but I'll never get tired of talking about it! I'll definitely be re-reading this one.

[Audio: 6 hours, 42 minutes]

Meredith says

If you're not at all familiar with Gretchen Rubin's theory of the Four Tendencies, then this book is a great entry point to her framework for how people respond to inner and outer expectations. I am a big fan of Gretchen's and I've read her previous books on happiness and habits, plus I listen to her podcast (and her sister's podcast) and I get her email updates and read her blog. So I already felt pretty immersed in the Four Tendencies before I read the book, and the book did not deepen my understanding of it significantly. It was still a good, quick read, but it felt a little hasty.

Her book The Happiness Project was very in-depth and probably took a significant amount of time for her to research and write. Its follow-on, Happier at Home, felt a little lighter and sketchier to me, without as many new insights. But then Better than Before, her book about habits (which is where she first touched on her idea of this personality framework), went deeper and added a lot to my own thinking about habits and habit formation. So maybe it's like an every-other-book situation, where the follow-on books get short shrift and are rushed to press -- or it may be that with her having such a strong media and social media presence, she shares many of her ideas in advance of the book, so that when the book is out it feels somewhat redundant to those of us who are devoted fans. The other thing is that it feels a little bit didactic -- she has a very strong viewpoint (that these tendencies are not changeable and that a person cannot be more than one tendency) which is fine, and I agree with a lot of her observations but I can't say I am absolutely 100% certain (as she is) that we can all be put into these four buckets.

All that said, I will keep this book and probably will come back to it in the future (as I have with The Happiness Project and Better than Before) -- it's still a solid resource even if I felt that much of the material

was already familiar. And to anyone who isn't immersed in her other work, it will likely feel fresh and enlightening. So, worthwhile and good, just didn't give me the a-ha! moments I had when I read the earlier books.

Robert says

I don't know where to start. I have read a few things claiming Gretchen is an expert, but as far as I can tell she has a law degree and is an author with no other qualifications and none are mentioned in the book. Why does that make her an expert? She has had dinner with some really impressive people and written some other books on improving yourself and happiness, but that still doesn't make her an expert. The book doesn't provide any research or proof that what she is talking about has any merit at all. Okay, that is a lie, she does reference one study held on the status posts of Facebook, if you can call that thorough research. I don't trust the posts on Facebook for most people, so how can you put someone in a bucket based on their post? She only has two pages of notes at the end and there is nothing meaningful there.

Gretchen tries to lump all of humanity into four groups and states a few of the groups can never overlap. A person also is always part of a group and never moves between the groups. If you are a rebel then you are always a rebel. First, I believe her quiz is flawed. My initial answer to any request is no, why should we do this, apparently this makes me a "Rebel". Then I think about the request and get more information to see if this is something I should really do, ok, makes me a "Questioner". But, if it is for my boss or a client, I will most likely say, let's do it, making me an "Obliger". WAIT you say! You can't be an Obliger and a Questioner, those two are not compatible. See the problem? Only my initial response fits into the Rebel category, not my actions after, then depending on the situation I am a questioner or an obliger. Oh did I mention that I also have many personality traits that Gretchen says fit into the Upholder tendency (which by the way is her tendency and she makes it appear is the best tendency).

Then there is the tone of the book. Gretchen makes it sound like the best tendency, and the tendency that every person should be, is the Upholder. That is her tendency after all. You do everything for yourself and others. It seems that Gretchen talks down on Obligers, the only way to get them to do anything is to make an external expectation outside of their own want or else nothing will get done. Obliger is a large portion of the book and it talks about how to get Obligers to do something, outer expectations get them to do something. (See what I did there? That is the entire book. It could have been five pages to get the non-repeated items out) I don't know how many times she mentions that you *must* have outer expectations to get an obliger to do something. It feels as though she is talking down about Obligers the entire chapter, and other non-Upholder tendencies in other chapters.

She uses a lot of stories and quotes in the book, but they don't feel real. They feel like Gretchen was looking for a quote, *any* quote, that would fit what she is writing about. It feels like she is saying, "Hey! I know have a great made up quote to fit what I need for this chapter." Oh, did I mention that there are no references to any person she talked to or the research that generated the quotes as well?

I feel the writing level is very low. She uses a lot of techniques to catch readers and make them feel like you are having a conversation. But on books that are supposed to be presenting new ways of thinking, I don't think casual conversation is the correct way to give the information, you need research to back up what you are trying to say.

She also takes a lot of famous people and puts them into one of the tendencies. How does she do this? She does it by reading their memoirs or by reading the book, in one instance she uses a Harry Potter character as the main example of one of the tendencies (maybe she feels if you can relate to that character that you will be

more likely to buy into the tendencies?). But, she doesn't really know the person. So she feels that by reading a few words from the person she can put them into a box that will tell us how they will always act.

Don't worry, she would put me in the bucket of Questioner, she writes "'Well, I question the validity of your framework,' you're probably a Questioner." If what she was writing had any merit, research, or proof as a "questioner" I would have changed my mind about her framework by the end of the book. But I didn't.

Please note, I only read this book because we had an assignment to do it for work (look I didn't question why and I didn't rebel and not do it, I was an obliher which doesn't fit into any of her ways for a questioner to get to this point, I just accepted it). If this had not been for work, I would have read the first chapter and said, "Nope!"

Megan says

I didn't find this to be as revelatory as it seems to be for so many.

To use Rubin's own language this book is definitely written by an Upholder. Full of little boxes to sort everyone into, and you must fit into a box. That is Upholder logic, if I understand it correctly. Tidy little rules for everything, and if you follow those rules everything in your life (and everyone else's) will be so much better. Personally, I don't think people are quite so simple, neat or orderly. I saw pieces of myself and my approach to expectations in every "tendency" and some of my approaches to expectations were never discussed (one of many problems with using purely anecdotal evidence to prop up a theory).

I'm also not crazy about the idea of a whole bunch of Rubin-ites, most disturbingly in the form of employers, teachers, dates, etc., walking around asking others how they feel about New Year's Resolutions, Breaking a Rule, or Inconveniencing Someone. Then, based on the reply, thinking they have the other person completely figured out. No need to do the hard work of actually getting to know a person because you are secretly sorting everyone in your head. By all means use this framework to inform your own goal setting/making, but for heaven's sake leave the rest of us out of it.

Postilla says

A very simplistic view, rather poor content, no actual research or evidence is provided for this operation of dividing all mankind in 4 pretty boxes. Sloppy writing also, with parts rehashed from Better than before, the author's previous book. What would you think of somebody who categorizes herself as upholder, and goes on to define 3 other categories, all of whom are missing something (either the ability to answer positively to external motivation, or to internal one, or to both of them) compared to her stellar own one? To me this book looks like a perfect marketing strategy, a case of poor judgement, a loss of time for the intelligent reader and a potential danger for the fragile one. Lots of people react to this supposedly hardwired tendency as if that would be the sign of doom and a justification for all that's gone wrong and will always go wrong in their life, since the author is adamant that one cannot change tendency in the course of her life and even that one displays the same tendency no matter the environment, the relationships, the scale of obligations.

Kelli says

The author profile on the back states that Gretchen Rubin is one of the most influential writers on human nature. Really? According to whom? I'd like to see *that* data (and also any data at all to support these four personality profiles that stemmed from a weird quiz about resolutions). But that goes with my type though. I'm a Questioner. 2 stars

Cheryl says

Oh. Oh. My. Gosh. Too simple to be so true, and surely not perfect for everyone, but goodness, perfect for me. For the first time in five blinking decades I've realized that I am actually a 'rebel' and not an 'obliger.' I was such a good girl as a child, and I've never done anything truly reckless as one would think of when one thinks of ppl who are rebellious, and I've always taken pretty good care of my household and family... but my personality is rebel, and that means nobody, not even me, can boss me around. And that's why there are things that I've wanted to do, but haven't done. And that's why I've called myself 'lazy' even though I often work very hard. And that's why... well, this is a review, not a confessional, so I'll stop there.

Now, the thing is, the three other ppl I live with are clearly 'rebels' too. And so it still is my job to behave towards my responsibilities as if I'm an 'obliger,' or, better yet, an 'upholder.' At the same time, I need to use the right strategies to help them make the right choices, which means more hands-off than I'm used to.... So I'm going to study the chapter on 'rebels' again, very carefully. Hey, but at least I don't need to read the rest of the book!

Short book, engagingly written. If you ever read pop psychology, or wish 'self-help' books were a bit more scientific, or have enjoyed Rubin's other work, or are struggling with Expectations (and/or Habits and/or Happiness) in your own life, I highly recommend this.

I'll put the best tips for 'rebels' in the comments as I study more....
OK, done, time to let some other library patron have a chance to read this.

Nicole Burrell says

I do tasks that will only take a minute immediately instead of saving them for later. I open boxes carefully so as not to damage them. I [try to] remove splinters with tape. I occasionally ask myself how future Nicole would feel about choices I am making now. And when I want to eat better, I abstain from garbage food because I know I'm not built for moderation.

I do all of these things because of suggestions from Gretchen Rubin. So, needless to say, I was very excited to receive a copy of her brand new book, set to release next week, called "The Four Tendencies".

If you read Rubin's last book, "Better than Before", or listen to her podcast, "Happier with Gretchen Rubin", the ideas in this new book will not be new to you. It takes her concept that all people fall into four broad personality profiles and expands on it, carefully outlining each one: Upholder, Questioner, Obliger, and Rebel.

On the technical side of things, I found the structure of the book to be just right. Chapters start with a broad definition of each tendency, including pros and cons. Then follows sections on how to deal with spouses, kids, coworkers, or healthcare patients with that tendency. It even talks about what type of jobs might suit you if you have that tendency. Although there were definitely a lot of points I had already heard her make,

she also had saved some material for the book, and I found new ideas and tips as I read.

As far as personal application goes, I found a ton of treasures in these pages. First, I hope this book gets into the hands of tons of teachers. They should donate it to them, make it mandatory reading, something...my teacher husband is sure going to hear about it. I spent my entire education being made to feel rebellious and like a “less-than” student because I questioned the status quo. The answer “because I said so” used to drive me bonkers because it made absolutely no sense. It really hampered the amount of success I had in high school because so much of my energy was spent fighting the injustice of the system instead of learning. When I got to college, where questions were not only welcomed but celebrated, I thrived. Now I know it is because I am a questioner. I wish my teachers in those younger years had taken the time to know me and figure that out.

I love the idea that by knowing myself and others better, I can be a better wife and friend, daughter and mom. I can treat myself better and chase my health goals more effectively. Like all of Rubin’s books, I finished with real action items to chase that I knew would result in a happier and more productive lifestyle. And who doesn’t want that?!

On the other side, I did feel that this book lacked some of the magic that was abounding in her huge hit, “The Happiness Project”. I missed the way she wove facts and applications into her own unfolding story. There were still anecdotes from herself and readers, but it didn’t feel like a memoir. This didn’t take away from the readability, I just hope she returns to her former glory in the next book she writes.

One other minor note. I wished she hadn’t plugged her app and podcast. She could have even mentioned them, but the way she pointedly talked about them by their full names made it feel like unnatural commercials stuck in the middle of a book. I would have saved that for the endnotes, where incidentally, she also mentioned them.

Finding the negatives in a great book can get super nit-picky. And that’s what I’ve done here. Because this is a great book. It’s worth picking up, maybe to kick off the new year, which is when I usually read her books, to start the school year, or as a Christmas gift for anyone and everyone. I doubt there is anyone who wouldn’t benefit from it.