

THE FOUR TENDENCIES QUIZ

Detailed Report: Upholder

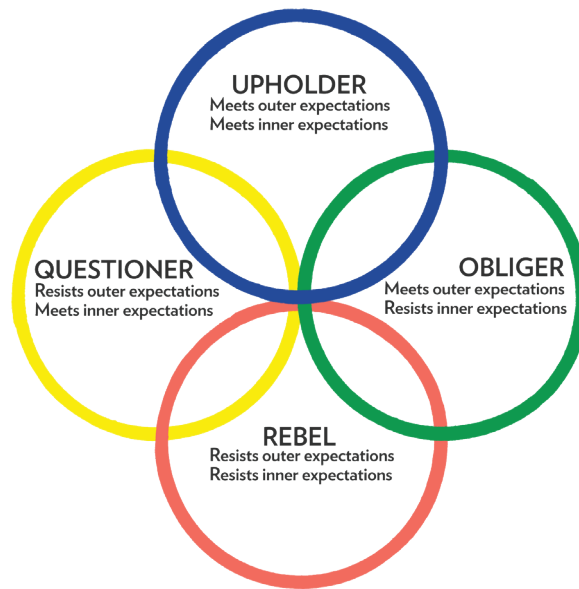
YOUR TENDENCY:

Upholder

According to your answers, your dominant Tendency is Upholder.

The “Four Tendencies” framework describes how we respond to expectations. We all face two kinds of expectations:

- outer expectations, such as meeting work deadlines or observing traffic regulations, and
- inner expectations, such as quitting napping or keeping a New Year’s resolution.



UPHOLDER:

“I do what others expect of me—and what I expect from myself.”

QUESTIONER:

“I do what I think is best, according to my judgment. If it doesn’t make sense, I won’t do it.”

OBLIGER:

“I do what I have to do. I don’t want to let others down, but I may let myself down.”

REBEL:

“I do what I want, in my own way. If you try to make me do something—even if I try to make myself do something—I’m less likely to do it.”

So what does it mean to be an Upholder?

Upholders respond readily to outer and inner expectations. They wake up and think: “What’s on the schedule and the to-do list for today?” They want to know what’s expected of them, and to meet those expectations. They avoid making mistakes or letting people down—including *themselves*.

Others can rely on Upholders, and Upholders can rely on themselves. They’re self-directed and have little trouble meeting commitments, keeping resolutions, or hitting deadlines (they often finish early).

They generally want to understand the rules, and often they search for the rules beyond the rules—as in the case of art or ethics.

Because Upholders feel a real obligation to meet their expectations for themselves, they have a strong instinct for self-preservation, and this helps protect them from burn-out.

However, Upholders may struggle in situations where expectations aren’t clear. They may feel compelled to meet expectations, even ones that seem pointless. They may feel uneasy when they know they’re not observing the rules, even unnecessary rules, or when they’re asked to change plans at the last minute. Others may find them rigid.

There’s a relentless quality to Upholder-ness, which can be tiring both to Upholders and the people around them.

Upholders embrace habits, and form them fairly easily, because they find habits gratifying. The fact that even habit-loving Upholders must struggle to foster good habits shows how challenging it is to shape our habits.

As outlined in *Better Than Before*, my book about habit change, certain strategies for habit change tend to have special appeal for Upholders. For instance, if you’re trying to exercise more, you might:

- Schedule exercise for a specific time instead of fitting it into your day at some point (Strategy of Scheduling)
- Keep a chart where you get a check mark every time you exercise, or use a pedometer to track your steps (Strategy of Monitoring)

- Take advantage of a big life change—new house, new job, or new relationship—to start strong with a new habit (Strategy of the Clean Slate)

Note: Upholders and Obligers are the two Tendencies that readily meet external expectations, so they have much in common. If this description of Upholders doesn't quite ring true to you as a description of yourself, you may be an Obliger. (Also, few people are Upholders, and many people are Obligers.)

The key difference is: How do you respond to an expectation you impose on *yourself*? If you readily meet that expectation, you're an Upholder. If you struggle to meet that expectation, you're an Obliger.

When we understand ourselves and how our Tendency shapes our perspective on the world, we can adapt our circumstances to suit our own nature—and when we understand how other people's Tendencies shape their perspective, we can engage with them more effectively.

The Four Tendencies explain *why we act* and *why we don't act*.