

# Changing Your Habits by Understanding the “Four Tendencies” Personality Framework

## What to Know

Research indicates 40% of choices and behaviors are shaped by habits. Most people have many habits (good and bad!), but how effective or helpful those habits are can vary dramatically. Do you:

- put an activity on a to-do list or schedule and follow through, or resist to-lists, planning, and schedules?
- make up your mind and do it, or require accountability?
- sign up for a class and complete it, or fail to follow through?
- function better in the morning or at night?
- easily abstain or prefer to limit or moderate?
- enjoy being creative or prefer being told what to do?

There are tools that work well for many people who want to change their habits. As you consider these tips, it can be helpful to know your “four tendencies” personality framework. This framework may reveal how you can most effectively change your habits. People generally fall into one of four categories: Upholder, Questioner, Rebel, or Obliger.

- **Upholders** respond well to both inner and outer rules.
  - Upholders ask, “What’s on the schedule and the to-do list for today?” They are motivated by execution and getting things accomplished. They dislike making mistakes, getting blamed, or failing to follow through.
- **Questioners** question all rules but may follow rules they agree with or endorse.
  - Questioners ask, “What needs to get done today?” They are motivated by understanding the reasons for courses of action. They dislike spending time and effort on activities they disagree with.
- **Rebels** resist all rules.
  - Rebels ask, “What do I want to do today?” They are motivated by a sense of freedom and self-determination. They want to determine their own course of action, and they may get pleasure from ignoring rules. They dislike being told what to do.
- **Obligiers** respond to outer rules but not to inner rules.
  - Obligiers ask, “What must I do today?” They are motivated by accountability, and they dislike being reprimanded or letting others down.

If you want to motivate yourself to change a habit, it is essential to understand your personality framework. These tips work for all four tendencies, but different tendencies may use the tools differently.

**1. Avoid breaking the chain.** This will work well if you love a streak. What you do consistently matters more than what you do occasionally. For example, while Rebels dislike being chained to behaviors, they do enjoy challenges. Rebels can use this tool to challenge themselves.

**2. Track your numbers.** Log your steps, words, minutes, or anything else you want to track. You manage what you monitor, and you can give yourself “credit” for each success.

**3. Use a one-sentence journal.** Record details along the way as you work to change a habit. You might include details like how easy or hard you found that day’s experience, whether you enjoyed it, what you accomplished, challenges you faced, and so on. Writing in a simple notebook or journal offers you time for mindful reflection each day.

**4. Create a photo log.** Make a visual record over time. For example, you might take a photo of something interesting each time you go for a walk outside in nature.

**5. Find an accountability partner.** Discuss your habit change with a friend, family member, coach, or group. You may want to post on social media for outer accountability.

**6. Track totals.** If you like to measure numbers that add up over time (such as miles, minutes, or words), use this technique to identify milestones. Set up a reward system when you meet each milestone.

**7. Set up notifications.** Perhaps you need to be reminded to follow a habit. Use notifications on your phone, for example, to remind yourself to work toward your goal and keep the habit prioritized.

An added advantage of these tools is they remind you of what you have accomplished. Realizing and celebrating all you have accomplished can keep you feeling encouraged and energized to keep going.

## What to Do

What habit do you want to change? Be specific.

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What is your primary personality framework? Why?

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Which technique do you think will work best for you to change a habit? Why?

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What will you do? Be specific.

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If you decide to track your progress, start by filling in the following chart.

Month: \_\_\_\_\_ Habit: \_\_\_\_\_

Who?	
What?	
Where?	
When?	
Why?	

What strategies will you use? Be specific.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Check off the days you were successful. Write down a brief description for each day. Make a copy of the chart if you need additional space.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Would an accountability partner help? Why or why not?

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Write down 2-3 people who might agree to be your accountability partner.

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### Reflections on This Exercise

Did this exercise help change a habit? Why or why not?

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What was the main obstacle you encountered practicing this exercise?

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Which activity helped you the most? Explain.

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Whom can you talk with to review what went well and what did not go well? Describe what you will say.

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What else can you do to change a habit?

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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