

Healthy Habits: Part One

Most of us know what to do to be healthier. But knowledge doesn't always lead to action. That's where habits come in.

When you make a healthful choice a habit, then it truly becomes part of your life.

In *Better Than Before*, author Gretchen Rubin provides insights on how to form and stick to habits. The book contains too many tips to list here, so I asked Rubin what seems to resonate most with her readers in terms of habits and healthy changes. Among her top picks: The Four Tendencies Framework, Abstainer vs. Moderator, Convenience, and Loophole Spotting. Read on to find out what these are all about!

Let's start with the **Four Tendencies Framework**, which puts people into one of four groups based on how they respond to expectations. This is important because when you try to form a new habit, you set an expectation for yourself. Take the quiz online to see if you are an Obliger, Upholder, Questioner, or Rebel (www.happiercast.com/quiz). Most of us are Obligers and Questioners.

Obligers are people who respond to outer expectations (like work deadlines or traffic laws) but struggle to meet inner expectations (like New Year's resolutions). I am an Obliger. When I set a goal to walk more, I lose interest after a few days. But when I report daily to my sister how many steps I take, I'm all in. My sister provides external accountability that helps me keep that habit.



Questioners are people who question both outer and inner expectations. If they find a habit to be valid and worthwhile, they'll stick to it. If you're a Questioner, you need to know *why* you are making a change. For example, when a dietitian tells you to eat less fat, you won't follow through unless you learn why it's necessary, and you agree.

Upholders are people who respond to both outer and inner expectations. These lucky people usually have it easiest in terms of forming habits. My husband is an Upholder. One day, he decided to jog two miles every morning. Twenty-five years later, he still jogs two miles every morning.

Rebels are people who resist all expectations. They don't like to be told what to do, even by themselves. But they may make a change in order to take a stand against something. For example, they may stop eating fast food because they oppose the influence of big corporations.

By Hollis Bass, MEd, RD, LD

BROUGHT TO YOU BY: