

Paleo Solution - 372

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Robb: Hey, folks. Robb Wolf here, another edition of The Paleo Solution Podcast. Today's guest, we've had her with us before, Gretchen Rubin. She is the multiple-time New York Times bestselling author of books such as Better Than Before, The Happiness Project, Happier At Home, and the soon to be released The Four Tendencies. Gretchen, how are you doing?

Gretchen: I'm great. I'm so happy to be talking to you.

Robb: Well, it's great to chat with you. I had a fantastic time talking with you in our first conversation, absolutely loved your book Better Than Before. Significant chunk of that material in referencing ended up in my second book Wired to Eat. I think you just have an amazing take on this whole behavior change story which, I have to admit, being a biochemist by trade and just kind of a caveman by predilection, I've not been that good at the stewarding of people through behavior change. It's kind of do or do not.

I have been pretty ineffective in that regard. And I've just had wonderful feedback from folks with regards to the second book and it really -- I need to give you a hat tip to so much of that because it really opened up my eyes to the need for more granularity and much more customization. And, I guess, that kind of leads into one of my first questions. You really have a keen interest in helping people live better lives. Why is that important to you? How did that get on your radar to even start?

Gretchen: It's interesting. Ever since I turned to writing -- I started out my career as a lawyer, ever since I turned to writing, my subject is human nature. That's sort of my big subject. But, I think, once you start looking at human nature and I know you've experienced this, one of the most interesting questions becomes why and how do people change?

Because so often there are things about ourselves that we want to change. So, how do we know ourselves? How do we understand ourselves? And once we know and understand ourselves, how can we use that information or that knowledge to make our lives happier or healthier or more productive or more creative? And there's so much information there about what it would take to be happy, healthy, productive and creative? And everybody kind of knows it. So, how is it? What's getting in our way? And that is just a fascinating, fascinating question.

Robb: It's funny because -- So, you released an online quiz for the Four Tendencies back in 2015. That's been incredibly popular. The first time that I looked at that and I just kind of sniffed around the periphery, I really thought that I would end up being in an Obliger. But then as I've gone through the whole process, I end up being a Rebel, which isn't actually that surprising when I consider the work that I've done. But you mentioned also that we're not really mixes, that those Venn diagrams, if there is overlap, is rather skinny. Can you talk about that? So much of this relates to the way that we process the external world versus the internal world.

Gretchen: Right. Absolutely. So, in my framework, which I call the Four Tendencies, it divides people into four tendencies, four categories. So, there's Upholders like me, Questioners, Obligers and Rebels like you. I'm going to give a quick description, and most people know what they are just from a quick description. But the quiz that you mentioned is at happiercast.com/quiz, if people want to take the quiz and kind of get an answer spit out.

So, you're exactly right. It has to do with how do we meet inner expectations and outer expectations? And, of course, all of us face both. So, we face outer expectations like a work deadline and we face inner expectations like my own desire to quit sugar. So, upholders readily meet outer and inner expectations. They keep the work deadline. They keep the New Year's resolution without much fuss.

Questioners question all expectations. They'll only do something if it meets their inner standard, if it meets their own inner expectation. So, they hate anything arbitrary or inefficient or unjustified. Then there are Obligers. Obligers readily meet outer expectations but they struggle to meet inner expectations. So, this is like a friend of mine who said, "Well, when I was in high school I was on the track team and I never missed track practice so why can't I go running now?" Well, I would say you're an Obliger. And when you had a team and a coach waiting for you expecting you, you had no trouble showing up. But now that it's just your own inner expectation, you're struggling.

And then, finally, Rebels. Rebels resist all expectations, outer and inner like. They want to do what they want to do in their own way in their own time. And if you ask or tell them to do something, they're very likely to resist. Now, you're right. I believe that people really are in a core tendency. Now, it's true that you can tip. Now, if I have the Venn diagram in front of me and could point it to you, you'd see that all of the tendencies overlap.

So, if you're a Rebel, you could be a rebel who tips to Questioner because Rebel and Questioners are alike in that they both resist outer expectations.

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Or you could be a Rebel who tips to Obliger because Rebels and Obligers both resist outer expectations. So, that kind of gives a flavor to how your tendency looks in the world. But I really do believe, and I have to say to a degree that really is proved kind of astonishing, people really do come from like a core tendency which is their instinctual response to an expectation, kind of what's their flash response. That's going to be what their tendency is.

Robb: And this is maybe a whacky question/observation but have you talked to anyone who's big in the game theory seen to see how these different tendencies would play out distributed across a population?

Gretchen: With game theory?

Robb: Yeah. Just how resources are allocated and how this tendency can have pluses and minuses here.

Gretchen: Yeah. That was very fascinating. No, I haven't but, no, it -- Well, it would also depend like who you're coming up against. Because there's definitely like pairs of these things where it works better or worse for people depending. So, you're right. That would actually be very -- I would need some big data to handle that but that would be a fascinating question. Yes.

Robb: Yeah. I'm kind of -- This shows how little I get out and have a social life. I'm into some of the Wolfram stuff like this cellular automata where you have these very simple rules that govern these highly complex processes all the way from like DNA folding, protein aggregation. But then it seems to describe a lot of what we see on the more macro level. And these tendencies, there'd been lots of different attempts at kind of categorizing people and providing some sort of unified framework. And so it just screams out to me that there's some sort of game theory Pareto distribution lurking in the whole [Audio/Connection Glitch] some traction out of the four tendencies.

Gretchen: Well, it's interesting. I think that all the tendencies can benefit either because they are figuring out -- You figure out how to manage yourself better. Or maybe you're not even having trouble managing yourself so much but you're having trouble or conflicts or frustrations with other people. And so when you understand how they may see the world in a different way from you, then you could figure out how to be more effective.

So, like I have a kid who's not doing his homework. He does really well on the tests but he does really badly on the homework. How do I explain this? What do I

do? What button do I push? When you understand the tendencies, you see that better. Now, that being said, I do think there are two tendencies who I hear from the most in terms of like, "Oh my gosh, this was like the revelation that changed my life."

First is Obligers because the thing about Obligers is they're often very frustrated because they see that they're meeting other people's expectations but they're not meeting their expectations for themselves. And they've all -- I'm sorry. I can't turn off my phone so we'll just wait a minute.

Robb: No problem. No problem.

Gretchen: I've got to figure out how to do that but I just can't.

Robb: We set the quality control standards on the show incredibly low from the beginning so people have very little expectation other than hopefully some decent content here and there. So, no problem.

Gretchen: Okay. You're going to edit it out. So, Obligers are frustrated because they see themselves meeting outer expectations and they see themselves doing what other people want them to do but then they're letting themselves down. They're not keeping their promises to themselves. And this is often very frustrating for them. Now, Obligers often have a lot of explanations for this. And I have to say, in my framework, I'm like ignore those explanations, ignore like it's not, in my mind, it's not that you're a people pleaser, it's not that you have low self esteem, it's not that you're lazy, it's not that you put others first. What it is, is that you're meeting outer expectations but you're struggling to meet inner expectations.

And from that follows the solution. And here is the thing that Obligers get which is if there is an inner expectation which they're having trouble meeting, which by definition they are, that is the definition of an Obliger, the solution, the very simple answer is to create outer accountability for whatever that inner expectation is.

So, if you're thinking that you want to read more, you join a book group. If you want to exercise more, you join a class where they take attendance and where you have to pay or you workout with a friend who's annoyed if you don't show up. Or you workout with a trainer who's expecting you or you think of your duty to be a role model for other people in your family or you sign up for a 5k where you're going to be, where if you don't do it, the philanthropy that you're very committed to makes less money. These are all ways of building in outer accountability. It's very easy to do once you understand that that's what it is.

Because what Obligers often do is they often think like, "Well, I need to learn to put myself first. I need to learn to develop boundaries. I need to work on my inner motivation." In my observation, that doesn't work out well. It's much simpler and more effective and way faster to just build an outer accountability.

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And so I've heard from so many Obligers where this is like the giant light bulb that changes their life. Then I also hear from Rebels and maybe this rings true for you if you're a Rebel. Because Rebels are often frustrated because a lot of the strategies that work for other tendencies, and so a lot of the advice that people are kind of getting them to take doesn't work for them. So, they're like, "I signed up for an accountability group but I hate it." Or, "I made a to-do list but I refuse to do anything that's on my to-do list."

Or, "Everybody keeps reminding me that I really need to do this but the more that they remind me to do it, the more I refuse." And I'm like, "Yes, because you're a Rebel." And so if you are a Rebel or you're around a Rebel, you really want to understand the Rebel's spirit of resistance that you need to work with a Rebel frame of mind and speak to them in the Rebel language so that you don't accidentally trip off that spirit of resistance.

Because the thing is, Rebels can do anything they want to do. They could do anything they choose to do. But we can get in their way by trying to tell them to do things or ask them to do things. And so I think -- So, Questioners often have found it super useful -- Questioners get analysis paralysis sometimes. They can drain others. They don't understand why others get so frustrated and overwhelmed by their questioning which to them seems perfectly appropriate and normal and helpful.

Upholders can seem rigid. They don't understand why other people aren't meeting their standard. They don't understand why other people are constantly trying to change things around in a way that's very unsettling for upholders. But really, I think it's Obligers and Rebels who benefit the most.

Robb: That totally makes sense. Now, I'm just smiling right now because I'm, clearly I'm a Rebel. I'm almost certain that my wife is a Questioner and the hilarity that ensues sometime between the two of us is pretty incredible. And this is part of why I think we're a pretty good team. We work together on business. We do all kinds of stuff together. But she will make me crazy with the questions, the nuance and the detail. And I'm very macro and just kind of like plow ahead and then she has this almost lawyer-esque tendency to be able to just like risk analyze every contingency imaginable.

But yet also, for me, and maybe it's also being a scientist, although she's an economist by training, but my whole world is like a Gaussian distribution. So, it's like, "Oh, that's six standard deviations out the norm. Like a meteor strike to the planet is more likely than that." But she will equally weigh these things. Is that kind of a common characteristic of the Questioner?

Gretchen: Well, I don't know about that but they often do get analysis paralysis which is where they want more and more information and so they then can become paralyzed because they want more information. So, it might be related to that which is the idea of like we need to analyze this. It's interesting that she's a Questioner because one of the most stable patterns among the four tendencies is that if you have a Rebel who is paired up whether in romance or in work or, in your case, both, almost always that person is an Obliger. That is overwhelmingly the pattern.

It's not that Rebels never pair up with Questioners or Upholders but that it's much, much rare. So, makes me think like, "I wonder if she's really just a super intellectual rational Obliger."

Robb: That very well could be. I just have been pestering her to take this so that we would know. She's so busy with the kids and everything else that she hasn't set that up. But for myself, I will go work out, I will go to jujitsu, I'll do all those other stuff. But for her, I need to say, "Okay, it's time for you to work out." And so it's kind of that thing that you had mentioned. Like if she signed up on something and has that outer expectation in that sense that she's going to let someone down then she really succeeds with that.

Gretchen: I think she sounds like an Obliger.

Robb: Yeah, very well could be.

Gretchen: And that would make sense. I mean, one of the things -- this is sort of a good example -- is sometimes people are like, "Oh, I'm an Obliger so all Obligers are really like warm and considerate for other people." Or, "I'm a scientist so I must be a Questioner." And the thing about this is this is a framework that is extremely narrow. It's not like a personality framework that tries to paint a picture of your whole personality. You're a Rebel. We could line up 50 Rebels and depending on how ambitious they were, how considerate of other people they were, how controlling they were, how adventurous they were, how neurotic they were, how introverted or extroverted they were, how analytical they were, all these things would make them look very, very different from each other. They would look completely different.

But as to this one thing, how do they respond to expectations, they would respond in the same way. So, this is a very narrow slice of your personality. It's not like, "Oh, anybody who's data driven is a Questioner." No. The question is, if I ask you to do something, is your first response, "Why should I?"

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My husband is a Questioner and he's always, anything that I ask him to do, it's always, "Why should I?" Not in a bad way. It used to really annoy me. It still sometimes when he's like... why should I. But the Rebel, the response is, "You're not the boss of me. Maybe I'll choose to do it but I'll do it because I choose to because the fact is you can't tell me what to do."

An Obliger is like, "Do I have to?" You know what I mean? Are you telling me that I have to? But if I'm telling myself to do something then I can keep my promises to other people, I can always keep promises to myself. So, it is a very -- So, people can sometimes kind of look -- And the thing is, also you can't tell someone's tendency from the outside. You can't see what they're doing typically and know what they are. You have to understand their reasoning.

Because tendencies, like I'm a crazy low carb person. So, I eat almost no carbs except for like nuts. And I'm an Upholder. I love keeping the rules and knowing the rules and fulfilling the rules. It really fits into my mentality. I really believe in it and it's easy for me to execute on it. And I have a friend who's a Rebel who eats the exact same way I do. But he's like, "You know what, this ridiculous FDA regulation? They can't tell me what to do. I'm part of this like core group of people who know the truth. We're different from everybody else. He's out there eating their stupid junk food and additive sugar." He has a very Rebel mentality.

From the outside, we'd look like we're acting exactly the same way. But we could not be coming from more different places. Because in me, it's like, "Oh, I'm upholding the rules." And him, he's like "I'm breaking all the rules."

Robb: Oh, that's hilarious. Exactly the same behavior, completely different motivations to drive that behavior.

Gretchen: So, you have to understand how people are thinking. But once you understand how they're thinking you can see how they're different because for you the kind of thing that would make you want to do something would be very different from the kind of thing that would make your wife, like the kind of situation, the way you'd set it up might be very, very different.

And also, if you say -- Like sometimes to an Obliger, people would say something like, "Well, you just have to want it." Well, that's a very Rebel thing to say. That

doesn't really work for Obligers, you know what I mean? That's not helpful. That's not a helpful way to inspire them to change because it just doesn't -- It's not that they disagree with it. It's just like, yeah, whatever. It just doesn't matter.

Robb: Right.

Gretchen: And Questioners often make the mistake of just loading people with information, just thinking like eventually, if I just give you enough research and enough justification, your mind will be changed and then your behavior will follow because that's what makes people change, is when they see the light. And it's like, yeah, that doesn't really work with others necessarily.

Just giving them more data isn't going to necessarily change the way they actually act. So, if you're trying to get somebody to take like their blood pressure medication, just handing them a bunch of studies -- Well, it might work. But it might not work. And if it doesn't work, what else would you try? That's what the four tendencies try to suggest. These are other things to try, other arguments to make that might help you communicate more effectively.

Robb: Wow. It's so powerful. Melissa Hartwig with the Whole30, they are using this platform. They denigrated quite a bit with you, is that correct?

Gretchen: Yeah. And Melissa Hartwig interestingly is an Upholder. She said that it's really helped her to understand where other people are coming from. So, there aren't equal numbers of all the tendencies. So, Upholder -- Well, the biggest one for both men and women, the biggest one is Obliger. So, you either are an Obliger or you have many Obligers in your life, very big tendency. Right behind them, Questioners.

So, this is where the big group of people are as Obligers and Questioners. Robb, I do not think you'll be surprised, as a Rebel, to hear that is the smallest tendency. It's a conspicuous tendency but it's small. Not that many people are Rebels. Only slightly more people are Upholders. Those are the two kind of extreme personalities. There are not many of them. And so we kind of see the world in a different way for most people. And so Melissa said that's been really helpful for her to understand. Most people aren't coming from the same place that she's coming from and that's helpful.

Robb: Right. And it's not surprising for me. I end up being the low carb guy, the libertarian, the atheist, just kind of this long list of very lonely intellectual pursuits to jump into. What are you working on in your own life? So, you have such an amazing grasp of this specific information. You have at your disposal enormous amounts of information, all kinds of stories of profound change that people are experiencing. How has that experience for you? Has it made things

easier for you, harder for you? I mean, it seems like a lot of, potentially a lot of pressure. It's like, oh, you're like the change guru. You know this stuff inside out and backwards so it should be easier. Is that actually easier for you?

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Gretchen: Well, you're exactly right. Through my writing either on my site, gretchenrubin.com, or through my books, I have a podcast myself called Happier with Gretchen Rubin, I have an app called the Better app where it's just all about the four tendencies, so it's just a place where people go if they want to like swap experiences or ask questions or form accountability groups because Obligers need that accountability. They can do that on the Better app.

So, I have all this information coming to me from all different places all the time and I love it. It is so deep in my understanding because like I introduced the four tendencies framework in my book Better Than Before about habit change and after that it was like I had all what I thought this crazy fascinating counterintuitive interesting ideas about habits but all anybody wanted to talk about was the four tendencies.

They've got all these questions and all these examples and like doctors using it and teachers using it and spouses using it. I just dramatically deepened my understanding of something that I had created. Because I just couldn't -- You can't look it up in the library. I made it up. You can't like -- Some journalist was writing a story about it and was like, "Well, I want some examples of celebrities who are Rebels."

And I was like it's hard because I have to have like an inner picture of their life and it's hard to come up with examples. She goes, "Well, could you tell me more by tomorrow?" And I'm like, "No." Because I can't Google it, you know what I mean? It's like I have to just find it. And so having all these people come to me with their insights, their circumstances, the way they think about it, has just massively enriched my own understanding of human nature.

Because I just wouldn't be able to imagine all the different ways that people put it into use. So, I feel -- I mean, sometimes it feels like pressure because I just want to respond to everybody or I want to incorporate everything into my mind and into my framework and sometimes it feels like oh my god, there's all this information coming to me. But really it's exhilarating and so helpful.

Robb: I am wondering here. So, there's a saying that, it's a horrible saying, I think it was Stalin, but a million deaths, it's statistics, one death is a tragedy. I want to kind of flip that and, you know, what -- So, you've got millions of people who are experiencing this process of better understanding what their tendencies are, if

they're an abstainer or a moderator going back to better before. Can you think of a story or maybe a couple of stories that just really rocked your world? The benefit that the individual or the family or the community had was so profound. Could you share something like that?

Gretchen: Well, I just heard this one and it just gave me goose bumps. And it's a Rebel one so this will ring true for you perhaps. I love this story. It just shows the power of how when you understand the tendencies it's not that you have to do everything differently. It's just that slight changes in vocabulary and approach can make an enormous difference. I think this is a circumstance that we can, a lot of us can identify with.

So, I had gotten an email from a woman who said, "I'm an Upholder and I have a five-year old daughter who's clearly a Rebel. I have other children. So, I know they're not all Rebels. This child is a Rebel. She's five years old. She's a Rebel. And I don't know how to get her to learn that there's certain things that she just has to do. Like she has to wash her hands after she uses the potty."

So, on the podcast, Happier with Gretchen Rubin, Elizabeth and I, my co-host, my sister, Elizabeth and I did a special episode where it was all listener questions. So, we talked about his woman's question. And I said, "Hey, I had to laugh because the fact is you don't have to wash your hands after you use the potty." You don't have to. And this little girl has figured that out. And if you want her to wash her hands after she uses the potty, you're going to have to persuade her that that's something that she wants to do and that's what she chooses to do for her own reasons.

So, we talked about it on the podcast. So then I get a follow up email from this woman, Dawn. She says, "I heard the response and I wanted to tell you how that has affected the way that I deal with my daughter." She said, "First of all, it made me realize--" Because one of the things I always say about Rebels that I think is the thing everybody else can learn about Rebels is that Rebels show us that we're more free than we think. We're way more free than we think. This is the big thing that I learned from Rebels.

She said, "I learned that as an Upholder from my daughter." And she said, "And here's an example of how I used it. So, my daughter and I were going over to my grandparent's house." So, it was this mother's grandparents. So, it was the daughter's great grandparents. These were very, very elderly frail people. She goes, she said, "And my daughter was running around reckless. And I thought, in the past, I would have said, you have to slow down. You need to stop running. Or I'm telling you, you have to sit in that chair."

And she said, "I realized I can't tell her what to do. So, I said to her, 'You know what, grammy is so weak. She just got out of the hospital. It would be terrible for her if she fell. She needs her protectors. Can you be her protector?'" And the little girl said, "Of course, I will be her protector." And then she changed her behavior.

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So, it was just the mother saying, "I want to help you be the kind of person. I'm giving you the choice. Do you choose to be this kind of person?" So, instead of in the mother's mind, "My little girl is a brat. She doesn't listen. She's inconsiderate." She is saying, "I have an important role for you to play in this family. Do you choose to accept that?" And the little girl was like, "Absolutely. That's the person I want to be. I am my great grandmother's protector."

And I just thought what a shift? And it was only in the way she talked to her daughter. It was only understanding what is going to resonate with that child. You can't tell her what she has to do because she doesn't have to do it. But you can show her who she can choose to be. That's a choice that she wanted to make. And so I just said, "oh my gosh, that's amazing."

And then I've heard from so many Obligers who are just like, "You know, I've gone in and out of Weight Watchers for years. And I go in and I lose weight and I have all this success and then I go off and then I'm like I need to lose weight again because I've gained all the weight back. And then I felt why should I pay for Weight Watchers because I know all the rules? I'll just do it myself. And then I don't do it and then I gain even more weight. What's wrong with me? I have no self control. I have no willpower. Why can't I do it?"

And I'm like, "There's nothing wrong with you." There's a huge number of people who are exactly like you. You are the biggest group in the world. You're the rock of the world, Obligers. All you need is outer accountability. If this is working for you, that's what you're getting from this, is the outer accountability of the system. Maybe you're going to find another system to give you that outer accountability. There's a million ways to have outer accountability. It doesn't have to be Weight Watchers. It could be a lot of other things. But that's what's working for you. That's what you need to replace or that's what you need to just accept as part of what's the process for you.

And for so many people, they're just like, "Oh, yeah. Now, I understand this pattern of my life. I succeeded at these times and these other times I didn't succeed. I thought it was all this other stuff but actually it was that accountability." Or like, "I was eating so healthfully when I had my family at

home but when my two kids went off to college and it was just me then I just started eating junk food all the time."

And you're like, yeah, because you needed that accountability. When you were cooking for others, you're like I need to have healthy meals for my family. When it's just you, you're like, "Oh, it doesn't matter." I'm like, "Well, you need to find some kind of outer accountability for that." Which is easy once you understand.

Robb: Right. If you understand the context, yeah. And I just have to--

Gretchen: You just have to understand like what is the situation.

Robb: Yeah, yeah. I just have to make sure that folks realize that when you were telling the Rebel story, I was not, in fact, crying. I was just cutting onions over here.

Gretchen: Okay.

Robb: That was powerful. That was really, really powerful.

Gretchen: Isn't it? Oh my god, when I got that email, I got goose bumps because I was just like, "Will you be her protector?" I just thought, oh my gosh. Because you think -- I mean, you're a Rebel. A lifetime of people telling you you're a brat, you're inconsiderate, you never listen, you can't do what you're told, you're disrespectful. It's like, no. You just have to say to somebody what do you want? What do you choose? How do you want this to play out?

I mean, I've heard from somebody like Rebel teenagers are like, "I was making my bed and then my mom came into my room and said be sure to make your bed so then, of course, I like to do the reverse."

Robb: They don't.

Gretchen: Yeah. You're not the boss of me. I'm like, oh my god. Or like the woman -- Oh my god, this is hilarious. This woman raves in the podcast Happier and she says, "Oh, we have this construction job, home construction job which should have taken two weeks. I kept reminding my husband and it took a year. What's his problem?" And I'm like, "You're the problem, my friend. If you had just not reminded him and let him do it whenever he felt like, which by the way was probably going to be at 2:00 a.m. one night, just let him do it in his own time without reminding him. Let him make that choice. He probably would have done it. But by constantly telling him to do it, you're igniting that spirit of resistance. You are the reason that it took so long."

So, if you just stop reminding and nagging, and let the person decide -- Well, you could say something like, "Well, the porch is a wreck and we're having a party in a week. And if the porch stays like this then everybody is just going to have to like come through the garage which isn't such a nice welcoming setting for a party, up to you."

Robb: Right, right. Oh, man. That is funny. Now that I think about it, I seem to remember my wife using some techniques like that. I think that she's instinctively kind of figured some of that out. So, wow.

Gretchen: Well, I think you're exactly right. I think people do often instinctively figure this out. Obligers realize they need outer accountability. So, they sign up for that class or they think about their duty to be a role model. Rebels figure out that they do better when they're not in an environment where everybody's telling them what to do but they're only doing what they choose to do when they choose to do it. Or Questioners get themselves to a work place where they're questioning and their drive for efficiency and rationale is something that's rewarded and valued and not like a place where everybody's supposed to be a team player and everybody is supposed to go along with whatever corporate says without making a fuss, where that Questioner tendency maybe is going to get them into trouble with their boss.

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They get themselves to a place where their tendency is a strength not a limitation. But it's just, I mean, just having a word for it and having kind of a, like just having it spelled out just kind of keeps things easier. Sorry. The phone again.

Robb: And just did it okay. Like you are okay being this person and having these tendencies. There's huge success that can be borne out of that but it can also be a hamstringing in process if it's too much of a blind alley for us.

Gretchen: Absolutely. Sometimes people say, well, what is the best tendency? Who is the happiest, who is the healthiest, who is the most creative, who is the most productive? It has to do with how you use it. Each of these tendencies include people who are hugely successful and also big losers. They each have strength and weaknesses. It's just a question of how do you figure it out how to harness the strength of your tendency and offset the weaknesses and limitations of your tendency so that you can build a life you want.

And I think you can learn a lot from the tendencies just like I learned from my Questioner husband I don't have to just do what somebody asked me to do because I can do it because I'm really good at doing something. I should say why should I do it? And I've learned from Rebels like I'm more free than I think. I

don't have to do a lot of things that I think that I have to do. I don't really have to do them. If I wanted to wear running shoes and yoga pants every day for the rest of my life, I could do that.

Robb: You can do it.

Gretchen: I can. I really can. There's a lot more freedom than we think. And so I think we all have a lot we can learn from each other.

Robb: That's fantastic. Well, Gretchen, I want to be respectful of your time. Please let folks know where they can track you down on the interwebs and then your book is releasing on September 12th, correct?

Gretchen: Yes.

Robb: Okay. And this show will go up that day. But let everyone know where they can find you.

Gretchen: Yes. So, I am all over the place. My site, gretchenrubin.com, I post almost every day on like sort of my adventures and happiness and good habits and the four tendencies. I'm on Twitter and Facebook and Instagram as Gretchen Rubin. I have my podcast Happier With Gretchen Rubin where I talk about how to be happier with my sister, Elizabeth Craft, and we talk a lot there about the four tendencies.

If people want to take the quiz -- A lot of times people can pretty much tell what they are from a short conversation but if you want to take the quiz, it's at happiercast.com/quiz. And I go through everything and a lot more nuance and more structured in the book, *The Four Tendencies*. And also in the book, it has something called the flash evaluation which is something that a lot of people ask me for which is if you're just meeting somebody, like you're interviewing them for a job, or you're like interviewing somebody who might be a roommate or you're out on the first date or you even just like had a cocktail party and you're trying to get a sense of what somebody's tendency is, how can you kind of get, how can you do it without like making them take the quiz or taking them through -- Are there quick ways to tell? That's something that a lot of people want. So, that's in the book as well.

Robb: Oh, fantastic.

Gretchen: Yeah. So, I love hearing from listeners and readers. So, yeah, get in touch with me. I've got a newsletter. I've got all kinds of stuff.

Robb: Well, I am signed up for all of that stuff. I follow your work religiously. My second book *Wired to Eat* has been quite successful and I really have to give you an enormous hat tip on that. The behavior change and the more nuanced approach to just accepting that folks are different and that we have strengths which can also be liabilities and if we can couch all that in the proper terms then we kind of stack the deck in our favor. Huge thank you for the work you've done.

Gretchen: Oh, yeah. And likewise. I've been such a fan of yours for such a long time.

Robb: Thank you. Well, the next time I'm out your direction, hopefully we can get a low carb meal together. It would be great to get my book signed.

Gretchen: Yes, yes. Absolutely. That would be so fun.

Robb: Fantastic, Gretchen. Well, take care and best of luck on all this work. And thank you again for all the hard work you do.

Gretchen: Oh, thank you. Great to talk to you.

Robb: Okay, talk to you soon. Bye.

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