

What kind of Sleeper Are You?



Sleep is sleep, right? Most likely, all you care about is getting enough of it. Guess again, there's more to sleep than you think. Everyone has a particular sleep style and understanding what yours is and how it affects you can help you make the most of your day.

Morning or Evening? Do you bound out of bed in the morning, instantly awake? In working an overnight shift, do you find it hard to get to sleep in the morning hours because you are most alert? You are probably a 'lark' person who is at their best during morning hours. The opposite of a lark is an "owl." Owls perk up in the evening and may be most productive during late-night shifts.

What to do: If you're an owl on a day shift, allow yourself extra time in the morning to wake up. Perhaps take a short nap immediately after work, saving late evening hours when you are more alert for paying bills, reading and housework. Larks on night shifts might try relaxation techniques, such as warm baths, deep breathing and sleeping in a darkened room to rest during morning hours. If you are a lark, pulling all-nighters to finish tasks probably isn't a good idea. Instead, get some sleep and wake up early to tackle unfinished business.

Flexible or inflexible? Some people are flexible sleepers, meaning that they can change shifts and sleeping hours without much adjustment time. Others are more inflexible, meaning that they thrive on a fixed sleep schedule.

What to do: If you need a steady sleep schedule, try going to bed and waking up at the same time every day, even on your days off. If you must change shifts, try preparing yourself a week or so ahead of time by gradually shifting your sleeping hours. Realize that it will take some time to get used to the new schedule. Nap when you can and take extra safety precautions at work.

Tip: Our society often equates sleeping "too much" with being lazy or unproductive. Remember that people have varying sleep needs and learn to respect your own. Getting the right amount of sleep is key to feeling energetic and alert- and being truly productive

The Art of Accountability Without Judgment

Do you shy away from holding people accountable because you're afraid of offending them? Here are three ways to get past that fear.

The first method is to roll up your sleeves and own part of the problem, as well as the solution. For instance, if one of our facilitators waits until the last minute to make his flight reservations -- resulting in doubled costs -- I could react with anger and accuse him of wasting money. The result? He would feel judged, might become defensive and come up with excuses as to why he waited until the last minute. But instead, I could say that at the root of this problem there must be something about being a facilitator that I don't understand. I could offer to work with him in developing a feedback system so that he will book travel in a timely manner, and then we could come up with a solution together. This openness is possible because he feels I'm owning part of the problem. And even though he's being held accountable, he doesn't feel judged.

Another way to hold someone accountable without being in judgment is to develop code words with the people you have regular interactions with. I find that code words communicate feedback without creating defensiveness. One of our facilitators has a code word she uses when she feels I'm not hearing her. Being from Canada, she says, "Canada rules." Because of our predetermined code word, I am able to recognize how she feels. Even if she responsibly said, "My experience right now is that I don't feel heard," it would be harder to take than a gentle code-word-reminder.

A third means of holding others accountable without judgment is to use a communication technique, called promise and request. When communicating we often deal in generalities, especially with our spouses. But if we make clear requests and receive a clear promise in response, then accountability is more likely to take place. For instance, if someone needs an hour of my time once a month to complete a project, they might say, "George, I will call your secretary to set up an hour appointment once a month. Will that work for you?" Then I will respond with a yes or no. That is holding me accountable.

In addition to these three methods for holding others accountable, it is also helpful to notice our response when we are held accountable. Even if another person approaches a problem without judgment, there's still the possibility that we may feel defensive. But if we can respond without judgment ourselves, i.e. consider the problem with neutrality and not take it personally, then we further the whole non-judgment process.

Using these techniques will improve your communication and help you develop the ability to hold others accountable without judgment.



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