

## Patience Personality Quiz

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How do you typically deal with stress?

Take this quiz to find out – and get some tips on both increasing your frustration tolerance and modeling it for your children.

**As quickly as possible and without thinking, choose the response that best fits you.**

My knee-jerk reaction to a stressful situation is usually:

- A) yelling, and occasionally throwing things
- B) retreating from the subject of my stress — a mess, screaming child, critical partner
- C) hitting, slapping or spanking
- D) I try not to react quickly.

After the stress has passed, I usually feel:

- A) drained and misunderstood
- B) lonely and overwhelmed
- C) guilt and shame
- D) calmer

I typically experience stress:

- A) Daily
- B) At least once a month
- C) Only occasionally, after I've let things build up
- D) Rarely

I generally vent my stress reaction on:

- A) My Children or Partner
- B) Myself
- C) Extended Family Members
- D) Co-workers or Friends

To reduce my stress or frustration, I try to:

- A) Pursue a Hobby
- B) Sleep or Meditate
- C) Exercise
- D) None of the Above/Other

When really frustrated, I have the urge to:

- A) Eat Junk Food
- B) Run Away
- C) Drink Alcohol or Smoke
- D) Don't Know/Other

As a child, I remember at least one of my parents or caregivers responding to stress by:

- A) Yelling or Arguing
- B) Retreating
- C) Hitting, Slapping or Throwing Things
- D) Don't Remember/Other

My children usually react to stress or overstimulation by:

- A) Yelling or Screaming
- B) Hiding
- C) Slapping and Hitting
- D) Not Sure/Other

When I am frustrated, it's usually from:

- A) Family Issues
- B) Work Issues
- C) Money Issues
- D) Some of the Above/Other

I think I would be less frustrated if:

- A) I felt more love and understanding from others.
- B) I could communicate my needs better.
- C) I had fewer demands for my time.
- D) I focused on staying balanced.

My typical reactions to stress have caused:

- A) Hurt feelings/Anxiety
- B) Lost Friendships
- C) Accidents and Injuries
- D) Changes in how I deal with stress.

My biggest fear about my lack of patience is:

- A) Getting fired for my temper
- B) Damaging my relationships with others
- C) Hurting myself or someone else
- D) The impact on my health

**Check your responses. If you chose:**

*Mostly A's —*

**Tame Old Yeller.** Like a loyal canine whose bark is louder than its bite, you are quick to voice displeasure during a tense moment — whether anyone is listening or not. In fact, you vent frustration through your vocal chords so much that your loved ones have learned to tune you out. No wonder you feel misunderstood and unloved. Are you dying to be heard? Take advice from a recovering old yeller: vent your frustration through your lungs by breathing deeply and slowly, and think before you blurt. Yelling may relieve some of the pressure, but hurtful words you utter in the heat of the moment can take a long time to heal. Instead of believing that your loved ones should “just know” what you need at any given moment, tell them. Calmly. Sweetly. When they are helpful, compliment their efforts. Like bees to honey they'll follow your lovely voice to the ends of the earth.

*Mostly B's —*

**Bow to Houdini.** Like the famous escape artist, you are a master at disappearing when faced with a frustrating situation. While this skill may have served you well as a child to avoid arguing or punishment, it is preventing you as an adult from facing your fears, improving relationships and growing the fruit of patience. Rather than allowing your family to support you when conflict appears, you tend to hide your feelings and only share them occasionally with people outside your intimate circle. This can be a lonely way to live and will deny you the joy that a long-term, close relationship brings. The next time you feel the urge to bolt or change the subject, ask yourself, “What am I afraid of? Rejection? Criticism?” Only *you* can make you feel put down or angry. Instead of retreating, focus on the problem, not the person. Look for solutions — not faults — in yourself or others. Your lonely days will soon be over.

*Mostly C's —*

**Beware of Dr. Jekyll.** You are a very physical person who has big reactions to life. That goes double for when you're angry because you need to express it physically in order for it to subside. You're more in touch with your body than your feelings and would prefer to throw something than talk it out. A moment of anger or frustration can take over your whole being — leaving damage and destruction in its wake. It's as though your mind clicks off for a second and your body lashes out with no regard for anything or anyone in its path, including your own body. Although you may try to appease the anger with unhealthy distractions, the monster just bides its time for another chance to strike.

Keep your body active in healthy physical ways like sports or dancing. Use self-calming breathing and counting exercises when you feel the urge to hit or smash something. You might also consider professional help to locate the source of your anger. Physical reactions can lead to violence that creates a cycle of shame for you and your family. Channel all that physical energy into something healthy. Reclaim your life.

***If you chose any D's —***

Before you can grow the fruit of patience, you need to understand the true sources of your frustration, and then find constructive ways to reduce it. Think about the common issues and situations that produce frustration and impatience for you. When you are frustrated, try to notice how your body feels and reacts, and what thoughts pop into your mind. Write down the time of day when you usually feel frustrated. By analyzing your major sources of frustration, you can then determine ways of coping, whether it's getting up a few minutes earlier than the family to prepare for the day, taking a walk during lunch or practicing some deep, cleansing breaths when you begin to feel impatient. Take time for yourself by scheduling a massage or taking a quiet bath *after* the children are in bed. Join a book club or take up a hobby to socialize with adults. Each person will be different, and finding what works for you is the key to a more patient, happier life.

If you are already practicing many of these suggestions, good for you! You have a patient personality!

*Christine Hierlmaier Nelson is a communications expert, mother of 2, and author of "Green Yellow Go! Nat Knows Bananas," a children's picture book about patience. She speaks to parenting groups about the importance of patience for academic achievement, resistance to addiction and positive socialization. Visit [www.patientparents.com](http://www.patientparents.com) to purchase her book or go to [www.patientparent.blogspot.com](http://www.patientparent.blogspot.com) to learn more patience tips.*