

# How Changing a Toilet Roll Determines One's Personality

*Shôn Ellerton, March 18, 2024*

*A fun and quick way to determine your or someone else's personality through the act of changing a toilet roll.*



No morning should start without that satisfying feeling of purging unwanted waste deposits from one's outer colon as part of our daily ablutions. In other words, in simple parlance. 'Having a dump!' I'm expecting some of my readers to recoil in abject horror with my choice of a topic veering towards the world of scatology, but bear with me. There may be a select few out there reading this very article while sitting on the Great White Throne, but for those that are, they have a distinct advantage in learning about what they are about to read.

Today, I am going to present to you various personalities through the way our toilet paper is presented on the spindle. Or not on the toilet spindle. The way that we change toilet rolls. I'm assuming that the toilet paper spindle, or holder, which ever term one is more used to, is easy enough to slide the toilet roll into. In other words, we must discount those toilet roll holders found in more industrial settings which house toilet rolls or, if one is unlucky, individual leaves of toilet paper encased within indestructible nuclear-proof plastic mouldings. I think most of us have encountered the frustration of having to measure and tear off the prescribed length of toilet paper suited to the immediate task from one of those heavy and massive drumrolls of toilet paper.

With industrial toilet roll holders, the physics don't work out. The downward force required to pull on the sheet to rotate the drum of toilet paper often exceeds the tensile strength of the perforated joins between consecutive sheets. To combat the problem, one must grip with two hands on the leading edges of the toilet paper

with as much surface contact as possible and very slowly pull down without ripping off one sheet at a time. Once the drumroll is more than halfway through, it's not too much of a problem, but often, one will find themselves getting their hands into the mechanism and aiding the dispensation of toilet paper by vigorously rotating it, often resulting with excess toilet paper trailing to the ground, which, of course, gets tossed away into the toilet because, I assume, most of us don't want to make contact with toilet paper which fell to the ground. Case in point. The makers have either got the physics all wrong or simply designed them to irritate us for laddish amusement.

Let's return to the important subject of how our personalities differ with respect to the way toilet paper is presented on a simple spindle or toilet roll holder. The type found in most people's homes.

I must point out the initial frustration of 'starting the roll', that often mundane and wasteful task of finding the trailing end of a brand new toilet roll. It is described, by some, to be the gentle art of detaching the first leaf from the roll and then being able to smoothly unroll it without any disruptions. The more impatient of us will experience the notorious phenomenon when the sheets will be out of sync and tear down the middle leaving one half of the roll thicker than the other. I am making an assumption here, but the most common remedy for this is to insert one's fingers through the thicker bit, and rip it out, with the hope that the sheets will align perfectly once more and in sync and rolling out perfectly.

Now begins the lesson!

Once the toilet roll is armed and ready for use, there are generally four things that can happen beyond this point.

The first scenario is when the toilet roll is inserted into the spindle with the leaf draping down from the back of the toilet roll against the wall. This is commonly known as the 'underhand pull' because one is reaching from underneath the roll and then, with the backs of the hands near to the wall, pulling the roll downwards.

This arrangement denotes the personality of one who harbours inhibitive behaviour. A reserved, guarded, and introverted person is, more than likely, one who will insert a toilet roll in this fashion. Such a person may display characteristics of being frugal in everyday life because it is often the case that when toilet paper is positioned with the trailing leaf next to the wall, less toilet paper is wasted. This is because it is generally more difficult to build up rotational

inertia in the roll by pulling it in this position than from the overhand position, in which will be discussed below.

The second scenario is when the toilet roll is inserted into the spindle with the leaf draping down from the *front* of the toilet roll. In other words, in a position whereby the trailing leaf is closest to you and does not require moving your hands under the roll towards the roll. This is, naturally, known as the ‘overhand pull’, and, generally speaking, it is more natural and more commonly implemented than the aforementioned ‘underhand pull’.

This arrangement denotes the personality of one who is more outgoing in nature, friendly, affable, but, perhaps, a little over-generous at times. But not in a bad way. Frugality is not the first thought that comes to mind before finishing the job at hand, which I mean, literally, of course. Should such a person encounter the situation in which the toilet paper had been installed with the ‘underhand pull’ configuration, it is very likely, that the person of an ‘overhand pull’ nature will immediately ‘correct’ the situation by removing and re-inserting the toilet paper in the ‘overhand pull’ configuration.

One important, and potentially embarrassing, thing to note about dispensing toilet paper using the overhand way is this. And it is a problem, yet again, of physics. Like the mathematical problem when a monkey climbs up a rope with a pulley at the top, there is point where the monkey and the rope will keep coming down on its own weight. Perfectly round toilet rolls on ultra-smooth spindles are prone to unfurling to the very last leaf if human intervention is not employed. This is particularly embarrassing when one is the guest at someone else’s house. There is not much one can do except either sheepishly and openly admit to the incident or secretly stashing the lot in a bin. The ‘underhand pull’ method is somewhat less at risk from this unwanted and embarrassing phenomenon.

The third and fourth scenarios both share the same property in that the toilet roll holder is not used at all. However, there are some differences as I will explain.

Now, before I continue, I need to add an additional assumption which I didn’t mention earlier. Personalities based on how toilet paper is presented in spindles of toilet roll holders may not apply to all countries. In some Asian countries, including China, toilet paper is often sold without a cardboard core, presumably because, many houses in China do not have toilet roll holders. An interesting point of cultural significance.

In the third scenario, the occupier of the throne will have deduced that the remaining amount of toilet paper on the spindle will be insufficient. However, rather than using the last of it, will reach for another new roll nearby and place it either on a shelf, on top of the cistern, or some other convenient location nearby. Such a scenario often occurs with those being too lazy to remove or of understanding how to remove what is left of the toilet paper from the toilet roll holder. Coupled with this, that person will be too embarrassed to use what's remaining on the roll in the holder and leaving an empty cardboard core on the holder. This scenario represents the personality of being lazy.

The fourth scenario is different in terms of timing and sequence of events. It occurs to those who, after having done their job, find that there is *no* toilet paper left in the holder. This often places the victim in panic mode hoping that a new toilet roll is available in the nearby vicinity. Spares are normally close by, but there are those occasions where they are not and in such a predicament, it is not uncommon for one to awkwardly crouch forward taking baby steps, because of the restriction of movement around the ankles, to reach the washbasin and then rummaging underneath for spares, an embarrassing situation in other people's homes. At this point, the victim will be so roused and wired up that the thought of meticulously removing the empty cardboard core and replacing it with a fresh roll is utterly absent from mind. After many 'misfires' leading to torn strips and discarded paper from trying to start a new roll to quickly, the roll is put to use and after, simply left on the shelf.

This scenario represents the personality of a person who is absent-minded and unthinking. Other traits include jumping to conclusions, acting rashly, being impulsive, and not planning ahead.

And there you have it!

Now that I have explained to you the various personalities one can have through the act of changing toilet rolls, the next time you pay a visit to the 'little house', you'd never think the same way again.