

# LOCUS OF CONTROL

Locus of control describes the degree to which you perceive that you have control over outcomes resulting from your own behaviours or from forces that are external to yourself. This produces a continuum with external control at one end and internal control at another.



Your locus of control is essential to your resilience and one of the major building blocks to increasing it. The more internal your locus of control is the more resilient you will be, the more you feel in control of your own destiny. The more external your locus of control the more resistant you will be and the more you will feel your fate is determined by external forces out of your control, feel helpless or powerless.

No one is external or internal a hundred per cent of the time it is a continuum and will fluctuate, however, one will be more dominant and for optimal resilience having a more internal locus of control is essential. Those people who are most successful or psychologically healthy believe they are responsible for their own success and have choice and control.

Those with External Locus of Control	Those with Internal Locus of Control
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take little or no responsibility for their behaviour</li> <li>• Blame others for what is wrong in their life</li> <li>• Tend not to do things that will change their life for the better</li> <li>• Emphasis is to avoid coming out of their personal comfort zones</li> <li>• When things go wrong they often do not learn from their mistakes</li> <li>• Tend to rely on other people’s approval to make them feel good</li> <li>• Have weak boundaries and strong barriers</li> <li>• Lack the ability to be able to inner reflect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take responsibility for their actions</li> <li>• Do things that will change their situation for the better</li> <li>• Emphasis is on striving for personal and professional achievement</li> <li>• Work hard to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities</li> <li>• When things go wrong they are inquisitive and try to work out why things turned out the way they did</li> <li>• Tend not to blame others</li> <li>• Have a more participative management style</li> <li>• Tend not to rely on other peoples evaluation for their self-esteem</li> <li>• Strong boundaries and weak barriers in most areas</li> <li>• Have the ability to inner reflect</li> </ul>

## How to Empower Yourself and Increase your Internal Locus of Control

Realise you always have a 'choice' to change your situation.

Even if you don't like the choices available at the time, even if the only change you can make is in your 'attitude', you always have some choices.

When you feel trapped, make a list of possible courses of action.

You may want to brainstorm ideas with a friend, to get more ideas than you initially considered – don't shoot these ideas down right away, just write them down.

Look at your list and evaluate each one and decide on the best course of action for you and keep the others back for alternatives. This exercise can open your eyes to the amount of choices you have in any given situation. Seeing new possibilities will become more of a habit.

Repeat this practice when you feel trapped in frustrating situations in your life. In more everyday situations you can expand your mind to new possibilities by working through this exercise.

Also: Notice your language and 'self talk'. If you tend to speak in absolutes, stop. If your self talk is generally negative, try to think more positively.

Phase out phrases like "I had no choice" and "I can't . . ." you can replace them with "I choose not to" or "I don't like my choices, but I will . . .". Realising and acknowledge that you always have choice (even if the choices aren't ideal) can help you to change your situation or accept it more easily, if it really is the best of all available options.

Your attitude affects your stress level more than you may realise, so you can make changes to keep stress down.

## Managing your high External Locus of Control

Recognise that the need to 'control' every situation is not possible.

Think about others around you and how they need to be empowered. If you always 'control' every situation you may disable those around you and restrict their opportunities to learn and develop or be you may be perceived as not being open to discussion.

Consider opportunities to delegate tasks. Take 'time out' to consider the impact of your behaviour on others be open to being persuaded and not always needing to have things your way.

Notice your language and 'self-talk'. "I need to", "I must" "I'll just", realise and understand you need to involve, include and listen to others and cannot 'control' all variables.