

LIFE COACHING

CETIFICATE COURSE



ROTTERS **LOCUS**
OF **CONTROL**

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The locus of control helps you distinguish between those who are living life in an empowered way (i.e. through an internal locus of control) vs those who are living in a disempowered way (i.e. through an external locus of control).

The Principle of 'Locus of Control' was coined by Julian Rotter (1954). It considers the idea that people tend to either believe that control lives internally (within them) or externally (with others or the situation). The locus of control exists on a spectrum: some individuals have a wholly internal or external locus of control, but others will have some balance between the two. For example, some people may be more internal at home while more external at work.

One core idea we've repeated throughout this course is that 'responsibility breeds empowerment'. Many people feel down, depressed and defeated because of their current situation and what's happening to them. They believe that things are happening to them which are out of their control and may even believe that other people have control over them and that they can't do anything but obey them.

This fatalistic mindset is what is known as the external locus of control. People with it believe that they are passive to the events and things which happen to them in life and accept their circumstances as they are. If they feel they've succeeded in something, they'll be more likely to attribute this to luck as supposed to their own skill/talent.



People who operate from an external locus of control tend to subscribe to ideas that they need to be 'kept safe'; that their past equals their future; that they are victims in life; that people need to keep them happy; that they are entitled to stuff without needing to work for it because life 'owes it to them' and believe that they should feel better because they want to feel better. These people allow themselves to be impacted by every event that happens to them in life and thus they allow the external world to control their lives rather than take control and responsibility of their own lives.

Our role as life coaches is to coach people out of this default state of mind into a greater realisation of what they're capable

of, who they are and how much power they have in their own life outcomes. Life coaches should strive to coach people into adopting the internal locus of control mindset. Whilst there's nothing we can do about what happens to us in life, we can always control how we respond to our external circumstances.

The internal locus of control breeds a very different attitude in people; they believe that they make things happen in life and that they can choose how they respond to the results and outcomes. Those with a high locus of control see themselves as being in control of their future and acknowledge that the choices they make will lead to their success or failure. Whatever the outcome, they have faith that they are able to overcome the obstacles they face and come out on top. They aren't negatively affected by people judging them, disliking them or misreading them: they believe in the validity of their core identity and

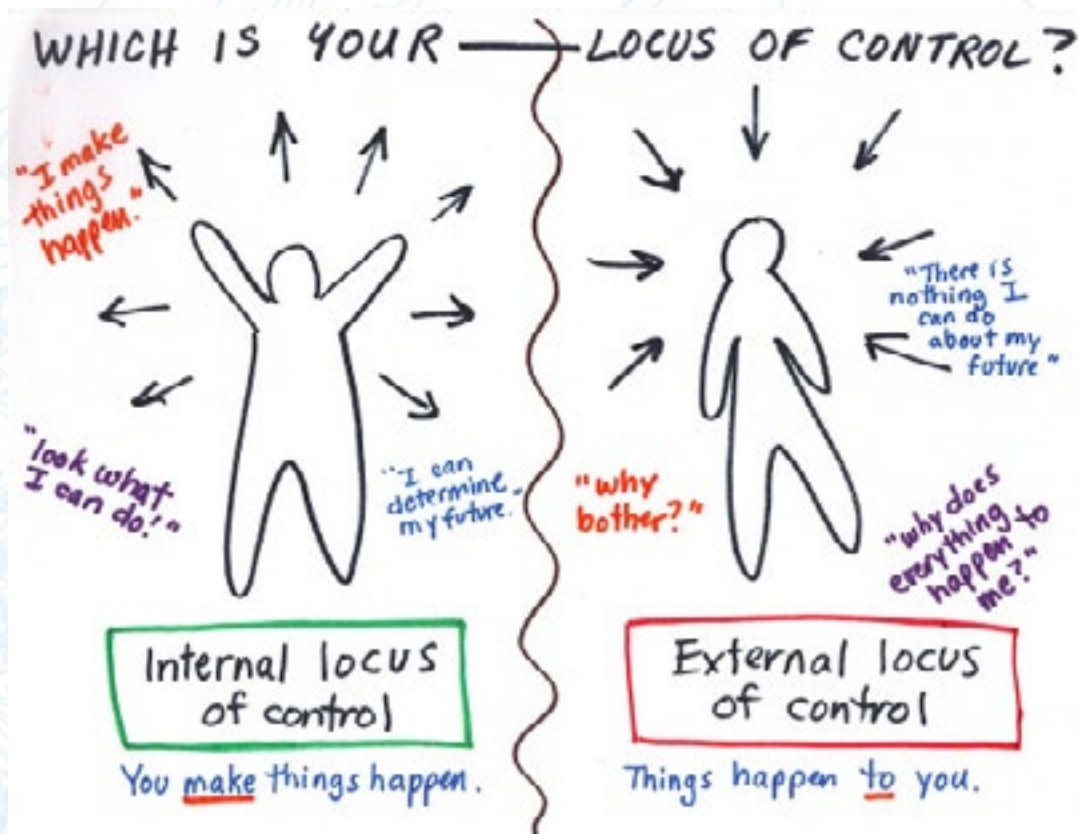


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trust in themselves that they are a good and well-intentioned person. If someone doesn't like them, that's their loss!

Those with an internal locus are those who have taken responsibility for the part that they play in their own outcomes. This doesn't mean, however, that people with an external locus of control are consciously and purposefully irresponsible people, rather, they're people who have faced hardship in life, struck by failures, illnesses, loss and rejection and just expect, by default, for these things to happen again to them. What life coaches need to show their clients is that there is no such thing as a universal power which will do things for or to them, but that only they are responsible for making good things come around in life. Yes, there are bad things which will happen to us, but our responses to these situations are what transform our lives for the better or worse.

The future is what we make it and we get what we work for in life. Life coaches need to encourage their clients to start being open to challenge, change and ideas in order to shift their mindset from an external to an internal locus of control. We need them to invest more energy and passion into personal growth than the desire to 'feel better/happier'.



ROTTER'S LOCUS OF CONTROL QUIZ

This is a questionnaire that will help you to determine where your locus of control lies. Each question consists of a pair of alternatives (a or b). Please select the statement from each pair which you more strongly believe to be true. Ensure that you chose the one you actually believe to be more true, as supposed to the one that you think you should choose or the one you would like to be true. Remember, this questionnaire is a measure of personal belief, so there are no right or wrong answers here.



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Consider your answers carefully but don't spend too much time on each one. In some questions, you may find that you believe both statements or neither one to be true. In this case, just select the one that you more strongly believe to be true. Lastly, try to respond to each question independently when making your choice; don't allow yourself to be influenced by your previous choices.

For each question select the statement that you agree with the most:

1. a. Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much.
b. The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy with them.
2. a. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
b. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.
3. a. One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics.
b. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.
4. a. In the long run, people get the respect they deserve in this world.
b. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.
5. a. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.
b. Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.
6. a. Without the right breaks, one cannot be an effective leader.
b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.
7. a. No matter how hard you try some people just don't like you.
b. People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.
8. a. Heredity plays a major role in determining one's personality.
b. It is one's experiences in life which determine what they're like.
9. a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.
b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.
10. a. In the case of the well-prepared student, there is rarely if ever such a thing as an unfair test.
b. Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to coursework that studying is really useless.
11. a. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has little or nothing to do with it.
b. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.
12. a. The average citizen can have an influence on government decisions.
b. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.



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- 13.** a. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to- be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.
- 14.** a. There are certain people who are just no good.
b. There is some good in everybody.
- 15.** a. In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.
- 16.** a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.
b. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability. Luck has little or nothing to do with it.
- 17.** a. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand, nor control.
b. By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.
- 18.** a. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.
b. There really is no such thing as "luck."
- 19.** a. One should always be willing to admit mistakes.
b. It is usually best to cover up one's mistakes.
- 20.** a. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.
b. How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are.
- 21.** a. In the long run, the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.
b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.
- 22.** a. With enough effort, we can wipe out political corruption.
b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.
- 23.** a. Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.
b. There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.
- 24.** a. A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they should do.
b. A good leader makes it clear to everybody what their jobs are.
- 25.** a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.
b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.
- 26.** a. People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.
b. There's not much use in trying too hard to please people, if they like you, they like you.
- 27.** a. There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.
b. Team sports are an excellent way to build character.



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- 28.** a. What happens to me is my own doing.
b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.

- 29.** a. Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.
b. In the long run, the people are responsible for a bad government on a national as well as on a local level.

Score one point for each of the following:

2.a, 3.b, 4.b, 5.b, 6.a, 7.a, 9.a, 10.b, 11.b, 12.b, 13.b, 15.b, 16.a, 17.a, 18.a, 20.a, 21.a, 22.b, 23.a, 25.a, 26.b, 28.b, 29.a.

A high score = External Locus of Control

A low score = Internal Locus of Control

