



ACTIVITY: Take Control

Purpose

- Recognize your perception of control
 - Internal – I control my outcomes
 - External – Outside influences control my outcomes.
- Identify areas of your life where you feel that you have no influence and change your mind set about those situations.

ESTIMATED TIME

10 minutes

MATERIALS

Required:

- A. None

Optional:

- A. Paper
- B. Pen

Background

- What if there was a way to boost your happiness, motivation, productivity, career success, and even extend your life expectancy? You'd want to give it a try, right? What's even more interesting is that research has found that to experience everything mentioned above you really only have to start thinking differently about the world around you. It's all a matter of control.
- "Feeling that we are in control is one of the strongest drivers of well-being and performance." (Achor) Notice that the statement says feeling. Believing that you have influence on the world around us leads to be more proactive and take action rather than be reactive.
- Most importantly, the feeling of being in control in our lives reduces the dangerous physiological effects of chronic stress leading to better overall health.

Activity

1. Identify situations in your life where you feel stuck, helpless, frustrated, or generally stressed. Choose one that has the biggest effect on your day to day.
2. Make a list of the items that are completely out of your control. These are the areas that you have permission to set aside. If they are truly out of your control there is nothing you can do to change them. No point in ruminating on them.
 - Share the list with a partner who will critically assess whether or not the item is completely out of your control.
3. Make a list of the items where you do have influence or control. You may find that many of the items on the list revolve around your beliefs about the situation.
 - Share your list with a partner and ask for suggestions about other areas of influence or control.
4. Be Proactive! Looking at your list of influence or control (#3) take one action to improve your feelings of helplessness.

Discussion Questions/ Key Points

- What insights did you gain from making a list?
- What actions are you planning on taking?
- What keeps you from recognizing the areas where we have control?
- Tell me about a time where you have only had influence but attained the results you wanted.

Let's Try This!

When you see someone being a victim of a perception of external perception of control help them recognize where they have influence or control.

Follow-up

Meet again to discuss what being proactive has done for your sense of resilience.

Achor, Shawn "The Happiness Advantage"

Spector, P (2002). Employee control and occupational stress. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 11(4)