

Controlling Behavior

List people, places, or things that depend on you _____

List the people, places, or things you depend on _____

Reasons to control others. Put an "X" next to reasons you feel the need to control people, places, and things in your life.

- If you control other people, they will do what you want them to do.
- It's a way to keep everything orderly and predictable
- You hate to be out of control or to lose your control.
- You find it difficult not to help when someone seems appears helpless and out of control.
- You hate to have people see your true feelings, like anger or negative feelings, so you control them and try not to upset others.
- You are on the watch for being taken advantage of by others.
- You are afraid of being manipulated or led into doing something you really don't want to do.
- When something or someone needs to be fixed, you step in.
- You want to be sure your current home life is better than the one you came from.
- You have an image, dream, or ideal of the way things are supposed to be and you work at trying to get it to be that way.
- You are afraid that if you don't take care of things, they won't get done.
- You are afraid that everything you have worked for will be lost, so you take control to ensure this doesn't happen.
- When you feel afraid, nervous, or uncertain, you take more control of the situation.
- When people don't do what you want them to do, you expect them to change their behaviors.
- You do whatever it takes to make sure people you care for are not taken advantage of.

INTERPRETATION: If you checked 3 or more, you tend to over-control the people, places, and things in your life.

Controlling Behavior

Reasons to be dependent on others. Put an "X" next to the behaviors you use to control people.

- You act helpless or lost to get attention.
- You make the other person feel very important and essential in your life.
- You feel self-pity and believe it's your turn now to be taken care of.
- You use threats of suicide or self-harm to get others to care for you.
- You give others a set of conditions they must do for you before you will give them acceptance, care, or approval.
- You offer them rewards if they will do what you want done.
- You withhold your involvement, attention, and concern if they don't do what you want done.
- You play on their sympathy and concern by being an overworked and unappreciated victim.
- You play on a real or perceived physical or emotional illness, to get them to do things for you.
- You play on their need to be needed to get them to take care of you.
- You play up to their guilt to get what you want.
- You fall apart when faced with having to do something which you would rather not do.
- You promise to change the behaviors the other wants you to change in order to get what you want, but you never mean to change.
- When you sense another person is pulling away from you, you make up a problem or need to get that person involved with you again.
- You act as if you have forgotten to do something so the other person will do for you.

INTERPRETATION: If you checked 3 or more items, you overuse control to get people to do what you could do for yourself.

To find out if others are controlling you to do things for them, go back and put an "X" next to those statements true for other people in your life.

If 3 or more are checked as you repeat this checklist, you may be over-controlled by others.

Controlling Behavior

What is your emotional response to life? Put an "X" next to the statements that are usually true for you.

- You allow yourself to be free, open, and expressive to the feelings you are experiencing at the moment.
- You usually do not try to hide your positive or negative feelings.
- You are usually able to accept the results of responses to your feelings.
- You are able to freely express your anger assertively, with no rage, yelling, or screaming.
- You are able to openly cry and grieve a loss event in your life.
- You are able to express any rage or anger outbursts privately so that you can return to people in a more composed way to let them know in a healthy assertive way how angry you are.
- You are able to question your emotions to see if they are rational or irrational. You figure out why, and what to do about it.
- You don't allow self-pity to affect your attitude or what you want out of life.
- If people in your life are acting out of control, you are able to freely express your feelings of disappointment without get hooked into their control issues or "games".
- If you feel bullied by someone, you admit your feelings to yourself and choose not to let that person control the way you feel, think, or act.
- You are able to admit feeling powerless over those things out of your control to change, fix, or rescue.
- You are able to feel at ease and have serenity in letting go of the "uncontrollable" and "unchangeables" in your life.
- You do not feel you are alone in having to deal with the pressures of life because you believe in a Higher Power.
- You feel detached from the behaviors, actions, and negative aspects of the people you care about but are not able to fix, rescue, or change.
- You are able to feel good about yourself with no guilt or remorse when you detach from people you had toxic relationships with in the past.
- You do not let fantasies, dreams, traditions, (or promises of the way things are supposed to be) interfere with seeing your life the way it really is.

INTERPRETATION: If there are two or more you didn't check, then you may need to work on control of your emotional life. Talk to your doctor or therapist about any control issues you have.

Controlling Behavior

Sometimes people try to over-control others so they feel better about themselves. But we shouldn't give power to anyone else over how we react, or how we express our feelings.

The ability to control and change our feelings, thinking, and actions are the only controllables and changeables that we have.

Where is the control in your life? Put an "X" next to the statements that are usually true for you.

- You accept and love yourself unconditionally even when you are having troubles, problems, failure, and/or pressure.
- You give no one but **you** the power to influence how you think, feel and act.
- You do not need other people's approval and acceptance to believe in yourself as a good and worthy person.
- Your self-esteem is strong enough that you rarely are emotionally affected by what people say to or about you.
- You are not affected emotionally by the response others give you when you assertively let them know you are feeling angry or negative.
- You are not afraid to say how you feel because someone might not approve or accept something you have to say.
- You do not feel dependent financially, emotionally, or physically on anyone who limits what you say, think, feel or do.
- You are able to openly admit when you have made a mistake or when you have experienced any failure.

If you were only able to check a few of these items, your control is more outside of you (external) than inside of you (internal). With internal control, you would have checked almost all of them. Which one do you have?

- External control means that your feelings depend more on what other people say or do than what you think. (This is usually not as healthy.)
- Internal control means your belief in yourself is enough to express yourself openly. (This is usually healthier.)

Modified from Messina, J. & Messina, C. (2009). Handling the need to control. Retrived 9-8-09 from <http://www.jamesjmessina.com/controlissues/needtocontrol.html>