

Mindset Monthly

The Locus of Control

Are you someone who attributes your failure and success in life to external factors, that are out of your control, like luck, other people, or a series of events? Or do you attribute your failure and success to internal factors, like your work ethic, or your preparedness, or your attitude? This issue will look at the theory related to this, examples of both traits, a real life story and how being aware of this puts you completely in control of your thoughts and mindset and your ability to change the way you look at things. These tools and knowledge could really help your understanding of you. Thanks for reading! I hope you enjoy it.

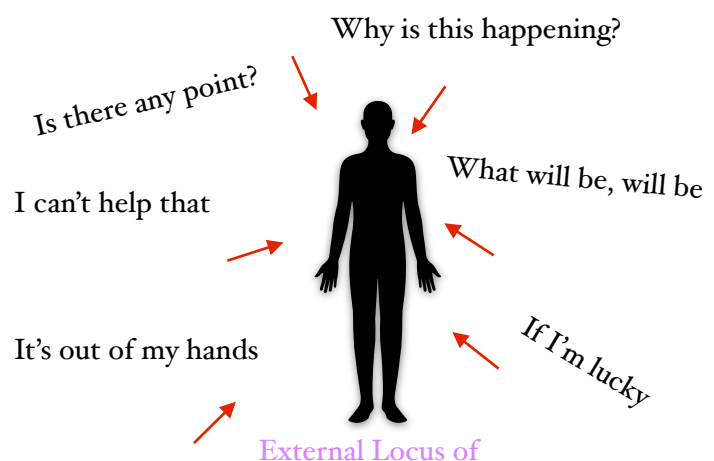
Locus of control is defined by two categories and describes the way a person believes their experiences, failures and success are effected by internal or external factors. Personality Psychology states that we all exist on a spectrum within the Locus of Control to varying extremes at varying times and situations.

Internal Locus of control refers to an individual who attributes their experiences to their approach, belief in themselves and their inner thoughts.

External Locus of Control refers to a person who attributes their experiences to things beyond their control, things they can't change and things that happen.

It's important to remember that one is not good and the other bad. It is all about understanding our belief system and the realisation that as individuals we are not always in control of our world and the things happening, but we are completely in control of how we respond to situations and in turn how we feel and think about things. This is very empowering and when practised can be a revelation.

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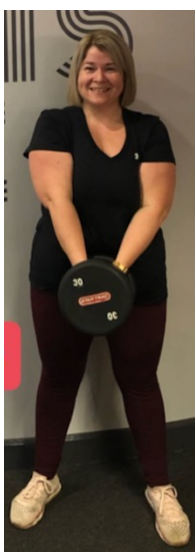
Real Life Examples:

- 1) You arrive at work late and flustered and you say 'I'm late because the traffic was awful, it's raining, I knew today was going to be a bad day as soon as I got up'
- 2) You arrive at work late and flustered and you say 'I'm so glad I'm finally here, I didn't think the weather would have such an impact on my journey, next time I'll leave a little earlier, I'm sure that will make a difference'.

Which example do you think is going to have a better, happier and more positive impact on your day?

My Story:

Having missed a couple of PT sessions because I was ill, although I still wasn't totally better I told myself I could and should go to my session. This PT session was at 5PM, when I usually train in the morning. Halfway through my session at rep number 40 of 50 15kg med ball slams, everything started to go black, my eyes were fuzzy, I felt sick and thought I was going to faint. In that moment I felt totally out of control, vulnerable, embarrassed and scared. My immediate response was: I knew I was ill, I shouldn't have done a 5pm session, I haven't drunk enough, I should have eaten, I'm so unfit, everyone will be laughing at me. Then I took a breath and stopped. I was blaming the external influences for this negative experience. I no longer had control over these influences and my confidence was on the floor. So instead, in that moment I made myself think: I have learned that I have limitations, I need to listen to my body and if its broken, I need to take extra care of it. This experience has been awful, but two years ago I wouldn't have even been exercising and would not be in this position, which is more favourable than where I was before. I knew I needed to stop and that's exactly what I did. I've learned something about my body and I fixed the problem before it got too bad. I then stood up and finished my workout. To maintain an internal Locus of Control in this situation I had to reflect and consider my response. My response was to go back the next day, discuss my feelings and insecurities openly with my very experienced and knowledgeable PT and not be afraid to try again. I accepted that this failure was not going to effect my progress and remembered I am in control of my future, I am in control of my effort and attitude and only I can determine a positive outcome. My negative experience has now turned into a learning opportunity, which I have embraced and understood.



It is widely believed that our position on the spectrum is influenced by our upbringing, culture and beliefs. Also, the older we get the easier it is to maintain an internal locus of control. To develop our children's internal Locus of Control, parents can encourage independent thinking and decision making and also encourage their understanding of actions and consequences.

My Message: The power of the mind and the effect it has on the most regular and daily tasks can not be underestimated, but the power we have as individuals to determine the way we think and feel about situations is even more powerful. If we take the time to breathe, think and reflect, the strength and understanding we can develop about ourselves gives us the ultimate control. I also believe the more you practice it, the more you are aware of it the more natural it becomes.