

The Source That A Person Believes To Be Exerting Control Over Life's Events Is Called _____.

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Understanding what influences our perception of control over life's events is a fundamental aspect of psychology and personal development. When individuals face challenges, successes, or uncertainties, they often seek explanations or sources that help them make sense of their experiences. The belief about the source that exerts control over life's events significantly impacts how people respond, cope, and move forward. This article explores the concept, its psychological underpinnings, types, and implications for personal well-being.

Defining the Concept: What Is the "Source" of Control?

The phrase "source that a person believes to be exerting control over life's events" refers to the underlying belief system or attribution that individuals hold about why things happen the way they do. This source can be internal—stemming from oneself—or external—originating outside of oneself.

Internal vs. External Locus of Control

The most common framework for understanding these beliefs is the concept of locus of control. Developed by psychologist Julian B. Rotter in 1954, the theory distinguishes between:

- Internal Locus of Control: The belief that one's own actions, decisions, and efforts primarily influence outcomes.
- External Locus of Control: The belief that external forces such as luck, fate, other people, or powerful entities control what happens.

The Role of Locus of Control in Human Behavior

The concept of locus of control influences motivation, behavior, emotional well-being, and even physical health. People with an internal locus tend to take initiative, accept responsibility, and persist in the face of setbacks. Conversely, those with an external locus may feel helpless, resigned, or less

motivated to change their circumstances.

Impacts on Personal Development

- Positive Outcomes for Internals:
 - Greater resilience
 - Higher achievement motivation
 - Better stress management
 - Enhanced problem-solving skills
- Challenges for Externals:
 - Increased feelings of helplessness
 - Lower self-efficacy
 - Higher susceptibility to stress and depression
 - Reduced likelihood to take proactive steps

Types of External Control Sources

When individuals believe that external factors exert control over their lives, they often attribute outcomes to specific sources, such as:

Fate or Destiny

- The idea that life events are predetermined or beyond human influence.
- Common in cultures with strong beliefs in fate.

Luck or Chance

- Believing that randomness or luck determines success or failure.
- Examples include gambling or relying on serendipity.

Other People or Authorities

- Blaming or crediting others, institutions, or authorities.
- Examples include blaming teachers, bosses, or government policies.

Environmental or Societal Factors

- External conditions like economic climate, social status, or natural disasters.
- These factors are perceived as overriding personal efforts.

Implications of Believing in External Control

Believing that external sources control life's events can have profound psychological and behavioral implications, both positive and negative.

Potential Negative Consequences

- Reduced Motivation: Feeling that efforts are futile diminishes motivation to pursue goals.
- Learned Helplessness: A state where individuals feel powerless, leading to passivity and depression.
- Lower Self-Efficacy: Doubting one's ability to influence outcomes reduces confidence.
- Resentment and Frustration: External blame can foster negative emotions.

Possible Positive Aspects

- Acceptance: Recognizing factors beyond control can reduce stress.
- Humility: Understanding limitations can promote humility and patience.
- Coping Strategies: External attribution can sometimes help individuals cope better with uncontrollable events.

Strategies to Shift Beliefs About Control

While some external influences are uncontrollable, fostering a balanced perception of control can improve mental health and life satisfaction.

Developing an Internal Locus of Control

- Engage in self-reflection about personal agency.
- Set realistic goals and take active steps toward achieving them.
- Practice positive affirmations and self-efficacy exercises.
- Learn from failures instead of blaming external factors.

Accepting External Factors

- Recognize situations where external forces are at play.
- Focus on adjusting responses rather than controlling the uncontrollable.
- Cultivate resilience by adapting to circumstances.

Conclusion: The Power of Perception in Control

The source that a person believes to be exerting control over life's events—whether internal or external—shapes their worldview, behavior, and emotional health. Understanding the dynamics of locus of control equips individuals with the insight to navigate life's uncertainties more effectively. Cultivating a healthy balance between recognizing personal agency and accepting external influences can lead to increased resilience, better coping skills, and a more fulfilling life.

By exploring these concepts, individuals can better understand their own beliefs about control, make informed changes, and foster a mindset conducive to growth and well-being. Whether the source is internal, external, or a combination of both, awareness is the first step toward empowering oneself to face life's challenges with confidence and resilience.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the term for the source that a person believes to be exerting control over life's events?

The source is called an 'external locus of control.'

How does an external locus of control influence a person's perception of their life?

It leads individuals to believe that external forces such as luck, fate, or other people are responsible for their life's outcomes.

What are common examples of external sources that people believe control their lives?

Examples include chance, destiny, powerful others, or supernatural forces.

How does having an external locus of control affect motivation and behavior?

People may feel less motivated to take initiative and may perceive their efforts as less effective since they believe external factors are in control.

Can a person have both internal and external locus of control at different times?

Yes, individuals can exhibit a mix of both, depending on the situation or

context.

Why is understanding whether someone has an external or internal locus of control important?

It helps in predicting their behavior, motivation, and how they cope with challenges, which is valuable in therapy, education, and personal development.

Is an external locus of control always detrimental to success?

Not necessarily; while it can reduce personal agency, recognizing external influences can also promote humility and awareness of contextual factors.

What psychological theory introduces the concept of loci of control?

The concept was introduced by psychologist Julian B. Rotter in his social learning theory.

Additional Resources

The Source That A Person Believes To Be Exerting Control Over Life's Events Is Called Locus of Control

Understanding the concept of the locus of control is fundamental to comprehending how individuals interpret and respond to the events that shape their lives. This psychological construct, first introduced by Julian B. Rotter in the 1950s, explores the degree to which people believe that they have control over the outcomes of their actions versus external forces dictating their fate. The belief system surrounding this idea influences motivation, behavior, and emotional well-being, making it a vital area of study in psychology, education, and personal development. In this article, we will delve into the nuances of the locus of control, examine its types, explore its implications, and discuss how understanding this concept can lead to more empowered and resilient individuals.

What Is Locus of Control?

The locus of control fundamentally refers to an individual's perception regarding the origins of their successes and failures. It answers the question: "Who or what is responsible for what happens to me?" This belief

influences how people interpret life events, cope with challenges, and set their goals.

Definition:

The locus of control is a psychological concept that describes a person's belief about the primary causes of their life experiences. It is categorized along a spectrum from internal to external.

Core Idea:

- Internal Locus of Control: The belief that one's own actions, decisions, and efforts directly influence outcomes.
- External Locus of Control: The belief that external forces such as fate, luck, other people, or uncontrollable circumstances are responsible for life events.

Impact:

People with an internal locus tend to be proactive, motivated, and resilient, whereas those with an external locus may feel powerless, passive, or resigned.

Types of Locus of Control

Understanding the two main types provides insight into personality differences and behavioral tendencies.

Internal Locus of Control

Individuals with an internal locus believe they are the architects of their destiny. They attribute success or failure to their own efforts, skills, and decisions.

Features:

- High sense of personal responsibility
- Greater motivation to work towards goals
- Tendency to persevere through difficulties
- More likely to engage in self-improvement activities

Advantages:

- Increased resilience in the face of setbacks
- Better academic and occupational performance
- Greater overall life satisfaction

Potential Downsides:

- Self-blame when things go wrong, leading to stress or burnout
- Overestimating personal control, ignoring external factors

External Locus of Control

Those with an external locus attribute outcomes to outside forces beyond their control.

Features:

- Belief that luck, fate, or powerful others determine events
- Less likely to take initiative or responsibility
- May feel helpless or passive

Implications:

- Reduced motivation to change circumstances
- Increased susceptibility to anxiety or depression
- Tendency to blame external factors for failures

Potential Downsides:

- Feelings of helplessness and learned helplessness
- Lower persistence in challenging situations

Measuring Locus of Control

Psychologists have developed various tools to assess an individual's locus of control, with the most popular being the Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale.

Features of Assessment Tools:

- Self-report questionnaires that gauge beliefs about control
- Scales that provide scores indicating the degree of internality or externality

Uses:

- Clinical diagnosis and therapy planning
- Educational assessments to improve student motivation
- Organizational settings to understand employee behavior

Implications of Locus of Control in Different Domains

The concept influences many aspects of life, from personal development to societal participation.

In Education

Students with an internal locus of control tend to perform better academically because they believe their efforts impact their grades.

Pros:

- Greater motivation to study and improve
- Increased resilience to academic setbacks

Cons:

- Potential frustration when external factors interfere (e.g., unfair testing conditions)

In the Workplace

Employees with an internal locus are more likely to take initiative and seek solutions.

Pros:

- Higher productivity and innovation
- Better adaptability to change

Cons:

- Possible frustration if they feel overly responsible for external problems

In Personal Life and Health

Health behaviors and lifestyle choices are significantly influenced by locus of control.

Internal locus:

- Engages in health-promoting behaviors (exercise, diet)
- Believes that personal actions can improve health

External locus:

- Blames genetics or luck for health issues
- Less likely to adopt preventive measures

Pros and Cons of Believing in Internal vs. External Control

Understanding the benefits and drawbacks of each belief system can help

individuals develop a balanced outlook.

Pros of Internal Locus of Control:

- Increased motivation and goal-setting
- Greater resilience and persistence
- Sense of empowerment and responsibility

Cons of Internal Locus of Control:

- Risk of self-blame and guilt
- Possible burnout from feeling solely responsible

Pros of External Locus of Control:

- Realistic acknowledgment of external influences
- Less self-blame, potentially reducing stress

Cons of External Locus of Control:

- Feelings of helplessness and passivity
- Reduced motivation to change circumstances

How to Shift Toward a More Internal Locus of Control

While some individuals naturally lean toward one side, it is possible to cultivate a more internal locus of control through conscious effort.

Strategies:

- Recognize and challenge external blame
- Set small, achievable goals to build confidence
- Reflect on past successes attributed to personal effort
- Develop problem-solving skills
- Practice mindfulness to increase awareness of personal agency

Benefits of Shift:

- Improved resilience
- Enhanced motivation and achievement
- Greater emotional well-being

Contemporary Research and Applications

Recent studies have expanded the understanding of locus of control, linking it to mental health, motivation, and social behavior.

Key Findings:

- A strong internal locus correlates with higher self-esteem and lower depression levels.
- External locus can be associated with learned helplessness, a risk factor for depression.
- Interventions aimed at fostering internal control beliefs can improve outcomes in therapy and education.

Applications:

- Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) often targets maladaptive beliefs about control.
- Educational programs focus on fostering a sense of mastery to boost student engagement.
- Workplace training emphasizes empowering employees to take ownership of their tasks.

Conclusion

The locus of control is a pivotal psychological concept that shapes how individuals interpret their experiences and influences their behavior. Whether one believes they exert control over life's events or perceives external forces as dominant, these beliefs profoundly impact motivation, resilience, and overall well-being. Recognizing one's locus of control can serve as a foundation for personal growth, mental health, and improved life outcomes. Cultivating a more internal belief system—while maintaining a realistic acknowledgment of external factors—can empower individuals to take charge of their lives, face challenges with confidence, and achieve their fullest potential. As research continues to evolve, understanding and leveraging the locus of control remains a valuable tool for psychologists, educators, and anyone committed to personal development.

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