

Understanding your Locus of Control

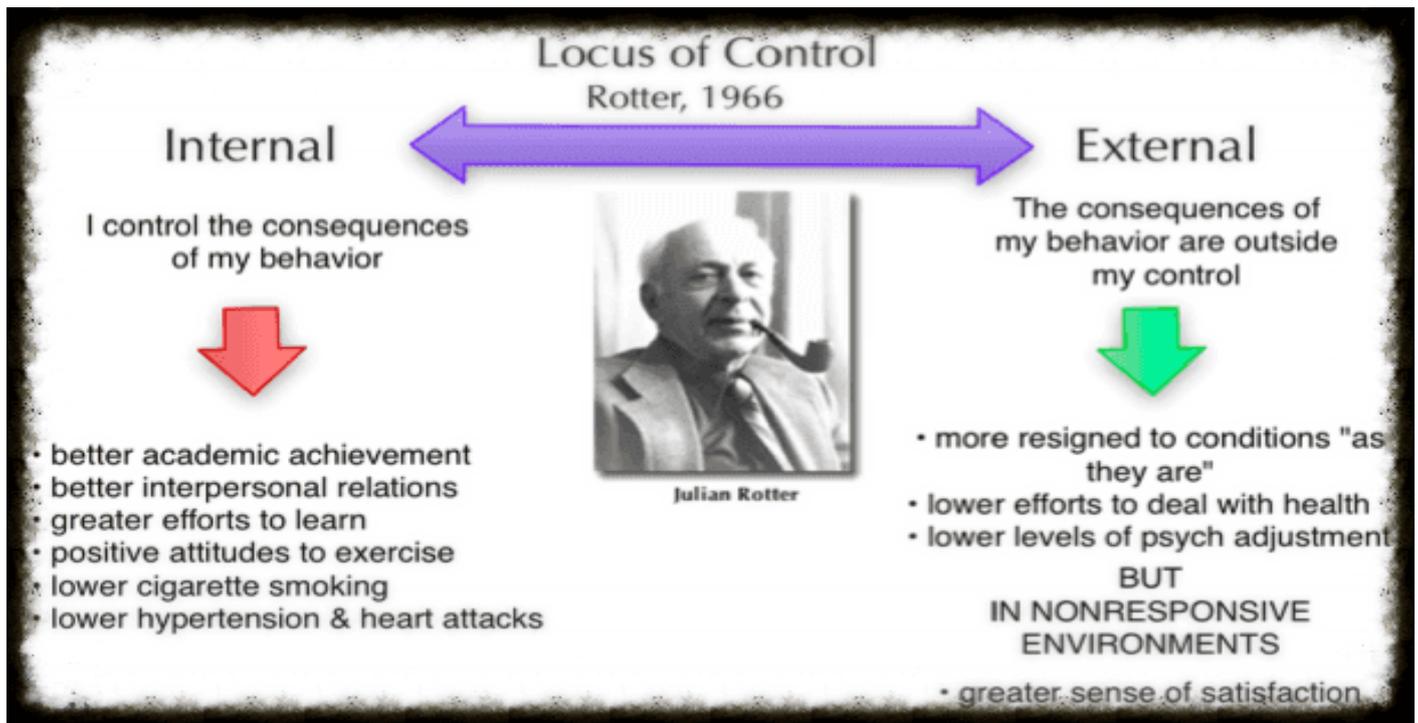
Written by Jonathan Kattenberg, LWC Founder

Understanding how you can control your mind and influence the life you desire...

Locus of control is one of the four dimensions of core self-evaluations. The concept of self-evaluations was first examined by Judge, Locke, and Durham (1997), and involved locus of control, neuroticism, generalized self-efficacy, and self-esteem, and since has proven to have the ability to predict several work outcomes, specifically towards job satisfaction and performance. So, for the purpose of this article we have solely focused on the locus of control.

The concept/principle is believed to have come from the late Julian Rotter in 1954 who was an American psychologist. Known for developing influential theories which included social learning theory and of course locus of control.

In 1966, Rotter published the famous I-E (Internal - External) scale in the journal Psychological Monographs. Used by many psychologists to ascertain the psychology of an individual's personality, the purpose of the Locus of Control is to support an understanding on how an individual's thoughts regarding the outcome of any one given event/challenge/task have been influenced.



Julian Rotter felt it had two concepts, Achievement Motivation (which he took to be linked with internal locus of control). This is where an individual's mindset can strive with the belief the ultimate outcome of any one given event is purely down to their own ability to manage the specific task. Depending on how internal a locus of control they are, ultimately dependents on their thoughts around how responsible they feel regarding the outcome.



Understanding your Locus of Control

Written by Jonathan Kattenberg, LWC Founder

So, people with a high internal locus of control believe in their own ability to control themselves and influence the world around them. They see their future as being in their own hands and that their own choices lead to success or failure

However, we truly feel having too strong an internal locus of control can have potentially stress damaging effects and more so on the individuals behaviours and what they feel responsible for in life.

Outer - directedness, or tendency to conform to others which Rotter took to be associated with external locus of control, is geared towards highlighting how an individual perceives what caused the ultimate outcome of an event and how it was influenced.

For example, a person may be trying to stop smoking, but doesn't achieve a successful outcome. The individual may blame the outcome on their current circumstances, maybe blame a significant other who could be experiencing challenging situations, or basically something or someone else. Alternatively, the individual may have taken on a work-related task and didn't achieve a successful outcome and subsequently places all the blame on external influences.

An unfortunate common response we find when working with clients is the thought of not achieving the financial wealth/lifestyle they desire and continue to blame outside influences throughout their life. Dependent on how external an individual may be, depends on how much blame they place on the external forces. This is especially an area of mindset we truly enjoy helping clients with their transition to becoming empowered to commence achieving the financial wealth they truly desire.

So understanding where we are positioned on the I-E scale can help ourselves understand how we assess a final outcome of any one given event. An individual can begin to analyse whether they are comfortable and at peace with the results, are they taking the correct level of action to enhance to desired outcome, possibly consider whether or not something could have been done differently. Or remain balanced within their mind when determining the next steps to achieve the life they desire. For some, a consideration regarding whether they desire to train their thought processes to find a more balanced approach when reacting on any event could be an appropriate course of action.

So, you may be asking, how do I find this scale? Attached is a link to a website which has a number of questions and provides an outcome, naturally dependent on the input and please be true to yourself, and answer with your first response. The Locus of Control is a thirteen-item questionnaire developed by Rotter (1966).

Here is the link - <http://www.psych.uncc.edu/pagoolka/LocusofControl-intro.html>

If you start answering the questions and feel your thoughts are being influenced by others or current circumstances that are affecting your inner thought processes, you may already start to realise that you have an external locus of control. How you are positioned on either side the scale is ultimately dependent on how you answer the questions. Be honest!

So, you've gained your initial outcome/results. Are you reflecting on the outcome? Can you visualise/remember or feel a time in the past where you responded to a situation/outcome? Maybe it was today?

When we support clients understanding their thought processes and where appropriate, teach how to re-programme their mind to understand that sometimes things happen because it was down to their own actions, but also, sometimes things happen outside of your control.



Understanding your Locus of Control

Written by Jonathan Kattenberg, LWC Founder

The results are amazing both in personal and family life, hobbies, career/business and financial achievements, because an individual can begin to learn how to achieve their desired outcomes without becoming stressed or suffering any form of anxiety with a balanced view and understanding of how to analyse a situation which they can either influence or not.

Please remember, there are many quotes out there all stating we ultimately influence our own lives and our destiny is in our own hands etc. But sometimes in life there are things which happen that are truly out of our control, remaining balanced with our thought processes can support our path to the healthy success we desire.

Most people have the ability in life to achieve the life they desire. Understanding how, is often one of the key contributory factors.

References

- Lefcourt, H.M. (1966). Internal versus external control of reinforcement: A review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 65, 4, 206–20
- Lefcourt, H.M. (1976). *Locus of Control: Current Trends in Theory and Research*. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Rotter, J.B. (1954). *Social learning and clinical psychology*. NY: Prentice-Hall
- Rotter, J.B. (1966). Generalized expectancies of internal versus external control of reinforcements. *Psychological Monographs*. 80, (609)
- Rotter J.B. (1990). Internal Versus External Control of Reinforcement: A Case History of a Variable, *American Psychologist*, April 1990, 490-493