



What Can I Control?

by Carmen Allen

Persistent negative or destructive thoughts, addictive behaviours, feelings of being trapped in a dark place—these things can make you feel powerless, ashamed and isolated. Not to mention sad, tormented or bitter.

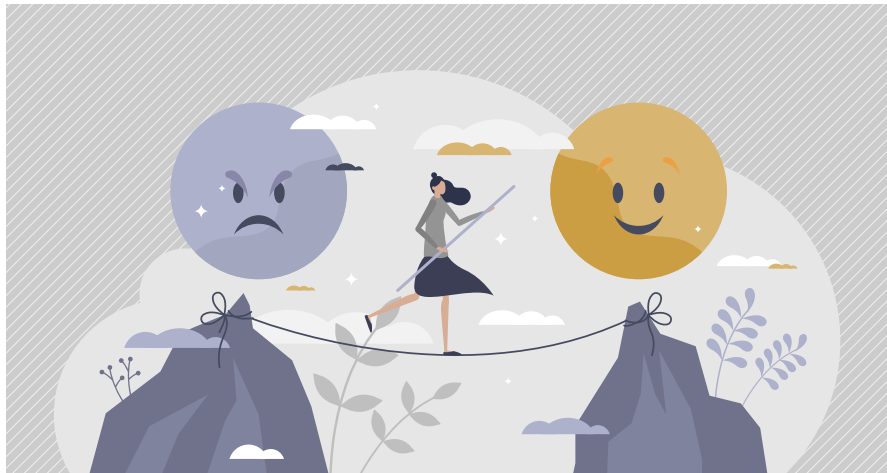
I'm not a psychologist, nor am I attempting to be the expert. But with self-control, particularly in the realm of our thoughts, I'd love to share an activity that helped me.

“You have power over your mind - not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength.” — Marcus Aurelius, Meditations

This quote by Marcus Aurelius, is key.

There are a lot of things you and I have no control over. Here's a short list, but I'm sure you'll think of more to add:

- ★ The weather.
- ★ Unexpected disease or illness, like cancer & dementia.
- ★ Job security.
- ★ Other people's words.
- ★ Other people's actions (behaviour).
- ★ What other people think - whether they like or accept us.



Now, of course, we can do a lot to TRY to secure those things. E.g. eat healthy foods to live a long life, work hard so we don't lose our job. But ultimately there are a ton of things outside of our control. This can leave us feeling powerless and at the mercy of fate.

So how can we build self-esteem and a sense of empowerment?

How do we become more self-controlled? We recognise the things that we have control over, and we decide to be the best version of ourselves. Only then can we be true to ourselves and serve and love others with unselfish motives.

So here's your chance to feel empowered.

On the next page, list 10 things you have control over. These are things that other people cannot take away from you or make you do. By doing this activity, you will feel more empowered.

Here's a simple example: *I have control over whether I clean my teeth today.*

If you're interested in discussing character traits like self-control with your child, I have a resource on my website that will help: Character Cards for Molly's Big Decision. [See what's included here.](#)

"Everybody in the world is seeking happiness—and there is one sure way to find it. That is by controlling your thoughts. Happiness doesn't depend on outward conditions. It depends on inner conditions."

— Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*

"Educate your children to self-control, to the habit of holding passion and prejudice and evil tendencies subject to an upright and reasoning will, and you have done much to abolish misery from their future and crimes from society."

— Benjamin Franklin

What CAN I control?

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A helpful and handy card.

Print and place on your fridge or mirror, or use as a bookmark.



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