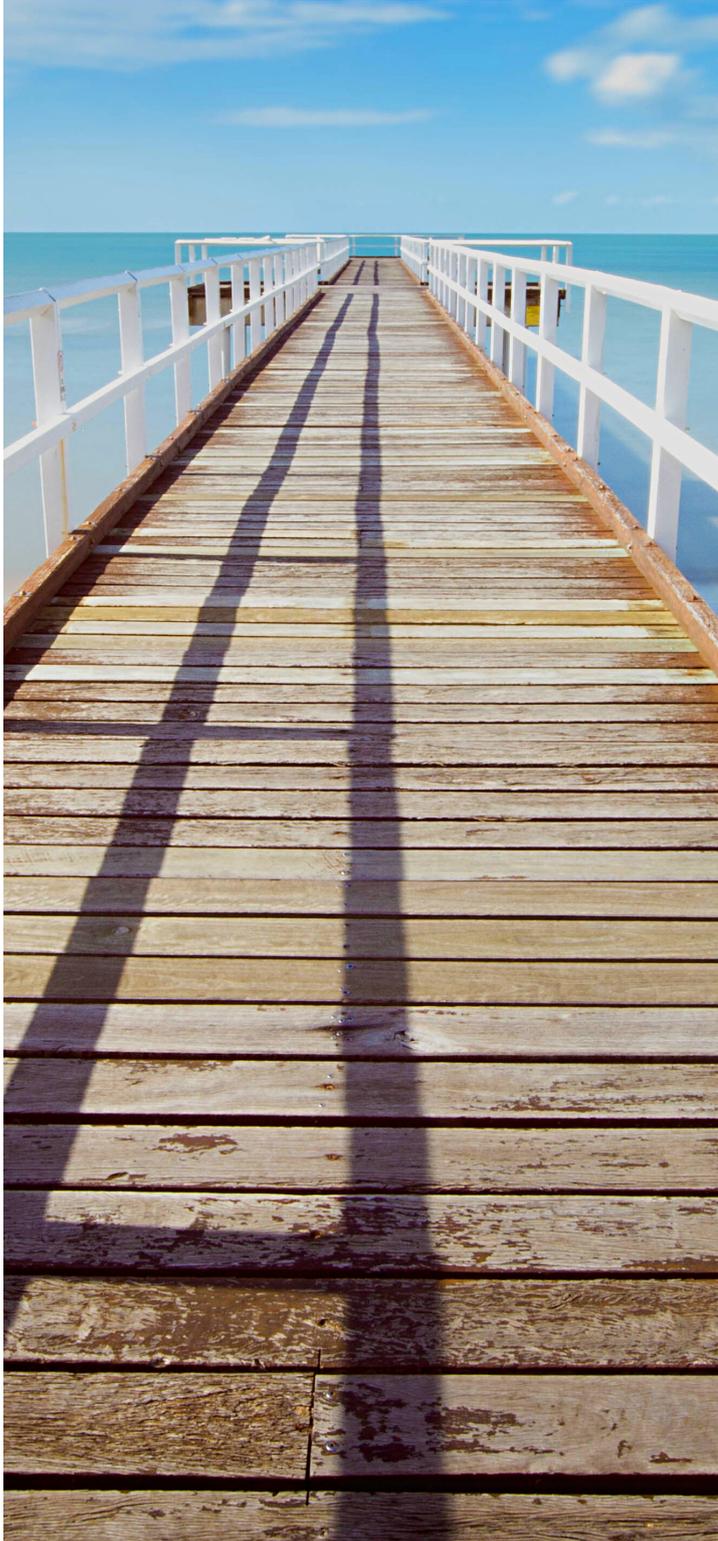


# PHILOSOPHY OF SELF DETERMINATION



## TIME TO TAKE CONTROL

This paper discusses the concept of the "**Will to Power**" which focuses on an individual's creative power to change, and make change, for the better.

The philosopher, Alfred Adler, believed that your mood, actions and destiny are your choice. Adler's school is known as "Individual Psychology" as he believed a human to be an indivisible whole with individual self-will. This, and many of his theories, can be applied to the career journey and the power to determine your own future.

Adler states that a person is connected with the surrounding world, and all actions and thoughts are taken individually, but whilst in the context of others, our perception of others and our social situations. For example, all of our thoughts and actions are taken in context of what we believe others think of us and this is the very area of thought we can change to positively impact our careers and lives.



# THE CONCEPT OF LOCUS



**Locus of control** describes the degree to which individuals perceive whether outcomes result from their own behaviours and decisions they make (internal) or from forces that are external to themselves / other people's actions (external).

Humans are on a broad spectrum with internal control locus at one end and external control locus at the other.

People who develop an **internal locus** of control believe that they are responsible for their own success. This means they tend to work harder and persevere longer in order to get what they want. Those with an internal locus **engage in activities that will improve their situation**, try to understand consequences to actions and find ways to make a situation better to create a positive outcome.



I don't have control



I have control





# UNDERSTANDING THE ABILITY TO CONTROL

## External Locus of Control

The feeling or perception that someone or something external to you is pulling the strings, leaving you with no control of a situation, is common. This leads to the belief that our success or failure is in the hands of others.

Typical to this feeling, people may hear themselves or others saying:

- *I am not enjoying my job but this is the only job I can do*
- *My clients don't value my service*
- *I can't do this as nobody told me how*
- *My manager is terrible and does not support me*
- *I was late and it's not my fault*

**Being unaware of how you can change your situation or outcomes for yourself, often leads to blame laid incorrectly.**

**Counteracting these thoughts, those with an internal locus of control may say phrases such as:**



- I am not enjoying my job so I will;  
*Speak with my boss*  
*Seek additional professional training and development*  
*Look for another role*
- My clients don't value my service therefore I will;  
*Engage with them to better understand their needs*  
*Review our pricing and delivery*  
*Look for new clients*
- Nobody told me how to do this so I will;  
*Ask someone for help*  
*Search for the answers through my own means*  
*Try as best I can*
- My manager is terrible and does not support me so I will;  
*Explain to them how I feel*  
*Identify what support I need and ask for help*  
*Ask for advice from peers*
- I was late so I will;  
*Plan to arrive early in anticipation of travel disruption*  
*Manage time commitments more effectively*  
*Communicate and apologise*



# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Those with an **external locus of control** believe that external forces such as luck and fate determine their life outcomes. This is often used in the concept of bad luck or being unlucky, and tends to be associated with people who assume the role of “the victim”.

While having a **strong external locus often is the hallmark of a person who does not take accountability**, having an entirely internal locus of control can also be destructive. Those who believe they can control everything and have tendencies towards narcissism, can be difficult teammates. As is often the way; balance is good.

Internal locus of control can help us feel less stressed and more empowered in many situations in life. It can be observed that those with a strong internal locus of control feel that they control their own destiny, rather than their fate being largely determined by external forces. It can lead you to be happier, less depressed, and less stressed.

## Benefits & Consequences

It is true that many life events that cause us stress are largely beyond our control. However, we can manage our reaction and emotional response to these events better by **focusing on the elements that we can control**.

While our tendency towards internal or external locus is inborn, it can be worked on and “improved” once you are aware of, and in control of, your reactions to and interpretations of events.



# TIPS TO DEVELOP GREATER INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL

## BE AWARE YOU HAVE A CHOICE

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Once you realise that you always have the choice to change your situation (even if this change isn't the facts but your perspective) this can be liberating and empowering.

You always have a choice. Making no choice is actually a choice in and of itself, and it's your choice to allow other people or events to decide your path.

## SET GOALS BIG OR SMALL

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Work towards small achievable goals. By working towards these and achieving these, you are controlling what happens in your life.

When you feel trapped, take action.

## REVIEW

### ESCAPE THE TRAPPED MINDSET

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When you feel stressed or trapped, make a list of all possible courses of action, do not filter or evaluate: write things down as they come to you as this will help snowball your creativity.

This is a good way of remembering what you can control and will create a habit of seeing new possibilities and outcomes in situations.

## SHAPE

### ENDLESS OPTIONS

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On a grander scale, philosophically speaking, if you have a strong external locus and believe that free will is an illusion there would be neither ethical responsibility nor the fundamental reason in doing anything.

Without the individual freedom to shape the future through our decisions and actions, human life loses its purpose.



## ABOUT US

The Lawson HR Group is a leading, privately owned group of specialist Executive Search, Professional Recruitment and HR Consulting companies.

We exist to help businesses achieve their objectives through their people.

Emotional Intelligence is a key attribute to achieving and facilitating high performance.

The Lawson HR Group run workshops and have a number of resources to help you and your team create a more positive workplace.

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