

CONTROL QUESTIONNAIRE

Dr Deepak Chopra, in his book *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind* puts the case that one major factor in reducing your life span is the need to be in control. Following is an extract from his book, along with a self-assessment of your need to control.

The mind finds it hard to accept uncertainty. It fears change, loss, and death. This is the source of resistance, which the body translates into stress. By imposing mental resistance, you create a threat your body has to cope with. Some people riding a roller coaster are screaming from excitement, others from terror. The ride is the same, but the ones who hold back and tense their bodies, generating a flood of stress hormones, experience terror. The ones who let go and allow themselves to be carried by the ride experience exhilaration.

The following test will give you a sense of how much resistance you are now in. Our psychological defenses are extremely good at hiding this from us; by definition, stored-up emotions are the ones we can't feel. However, resistance gives rise to a telltale behavior pattern—control. Having to be in control is a compulsion rooted in fear and threat. Even if you cannot get at the threat, your controlling behavior gives away its presence.

Put a tick (✓) beside the following statements if they apply to you **frequently, most of the time, or almost always**. Some of the statements do not sound very flattering, but try to be as candid and honest about yourself as you can.

1. I like to be in control of work situations and am much happier working alone than with others.	
2. When I'm under pressure, the easiest emotion for me to show is anger or irritability.	
3. I rarely tell anyone that I need them.	
4. I tend to harbor old hurts. Rather than telling someone that he hurt me, I would rather fantasize about getting even.	
5. I have quite a few resentments about the way my brothers and sisters relate to me.	
6. The more money I spend on someone, the more that means I love them.	
7. I keep to myself how unfairly others treat me.	
8. If a relationship starts to go bad, I secretly wish I could take back everything I bought for that person.	
9. If it's my house, the people in it should follow my rules.	
10. I find it hard to admit being vulnerable. I don't often say "I'm wrong" and mean it.	
11. It's better to nurse my wounds than to show someone that I'm weak.	
12. I'm a better talker than listener.	
13. What I have to say is usually important.	
14. I secretly think others don't take my opinions as seriously as they should.	
15. I have a pretty good sense of what's good for people.	
16. At least once in my life I got caught opening someone else's mail.	
17. People have called me cynical or negative.	
18. I have high standards, which others sometimes mistake for criticism.	
19. I tend to be a perfectionist. It bothers me to let a sloppy job go out.	

20. I feel uncomfortable if someone gets too close to me emotionally.	
21. After a relationship breaks up, I look back and think I was mostly in the right.	
22. I'm neat and orderly. I like my way of doing things and find it hard to live with someone who is sloppy.	
23. I'm good at scheduling my day and put a high value on punctuality.	
24. I'm good at caring for other people's needs, but then I get disappointed when they don't think as much about mine.	
25. I have a logical explanation for the way I act, even if others can't always accept it.	
26. I don't care that much if other people don't like me.	
27. In my opinion, most people don't usually express their true motives for the way they behave.	
28. I'm not good at handling noisy or rambunctious children.	
29. I still blame my parents for a lot of my problems, but I haven't told them so.	
30. When I get into an argument with my spouse or lover, I can't resist bringing up old grievances.	

Total score _____

Evaluating your score:

0-10 points

Your personality isn't dominated by an excessive need to be in control. You are likely to be comfortable with your feelings and tolerant of other people. You realize that you are imperfect, therefore you understand the failings of others. It is easy for you to let events take their own course, and surprises don't throw you off balance. You probably place a high value on spontaneity and the expression of emotions.

10-20 points

Being in control is a frequent issue with you. You have more fears and hurt feelings than you let on, but you don't work hard to resolve these feelings. Being in charge isn't necessarily that important to you, but having your way usually is. You consider yourself organized and efficient, yet it isn't a major event if things get a little out of control. You have found someone whom you can be honest and open with, but there are limits to how much you can safely say or do, even with that person.

Over 20 points

You are a controlling person. You feel that control is necessary because people hurt your feelings a lot, and your memory of this goes back into your painful childhood. To keep from being hurt more, you try to control your feelings, which basically means you are very selective about revealing yourself to others. Your overriding need to be in charge or to have things your way drives people away from you, despite the fact that you work very hard to take care of their needs. The only emotion you show easily is anger or irritability. You constantly explain your motives and give reasons for why you are the way you are, but somehow this doesn't help to get you what you want, which is other people's love and affection.

The purpose of this questionnaire is not to label anyone bad for being controlling. Losing control is an extremely unpleasant state.