

## What Controls Your Life?

**Purpose:** This is a device to measure your attitudes toward rewards and punishments: Do you feel that they come as a result of your own behavior or from outside sources? We have reproduced this device below so that you can measure yourself and determine your own beliefs. Read each set of two statements and decide which statement seems to you more accurate and place a check mark next to it. Read and answer carefully. There are no right or wrong choices. They are based on your personal judgments. Try to respond to each pair of statements independently, apart from your responses to other pairs of statements.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ a. A great deal that happens to me is probably a matter of chance.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. I am the master of my fate.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ a. It is almost impossible to figure out how to please some people.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. Getting along with people is a skill that must be practiced.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ a. People like me can change the course of world affairs if we make ourselves be heard.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. It is only wishful thinking to believe that one can really influence what happens in society at large.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ a. Most people get the respect they deserve in this world.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. An individual's capabilities often pass unrecognized no matter how hard he or she tries.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ a. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. Most students do not realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ a. If you do not get the right opportunities, one cannot become a good leader.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ a. Sometimes I feel that I have little to do with the grades I get.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. In my case, the grades I make are the results of my own efforts; luck has little or nothing to do with it.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ a. Heredity plays the major role in determining one's personality.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. It is one's experiences in life that determine what one is like.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ a. It is silly to think that one can really change another person's basic attitudes.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. When I am right, I can convince others.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ a. In my experience I have noticed that there is usually a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. Many times the reactions of teachers seem haphazard to me.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ a. The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ a. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ a. There are certain people who are just no good.  
\_\_\_\_\_ b. There is some good in everybody.

(continued)

Your total score (above control as internal and

14. \_\_\_\_\_ a. In my case, getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. Many times, we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ a. Promotions are earned through hard work and persistence.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. Making a lot of money is largely a matter of getting the right breaks.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ a. Marriage is largely a gamble.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. The number of divorces indicates that more and more people are not trying to make their marriages work.
17. \_\_\_\_\_ a. In our society, a person's future earning power is dependent on their ability.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. Getting promoted is really a matter of being a little luckier than the next person.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ a. Most people do not realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. There is really no such thing as luck.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ a. I have little influence over the way other people behave.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. If one knows how to deal with people, they are really quite easily led.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ a. In the long run, the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.
21. \_\_\_\_\_ a. With enough effort, we can wipe out political corruption.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.
22. \_\_\_\_\_ a. A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they should do.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. A good leader makes it clear to everybody what their jobs are.
23. \_\_\_\_\_ a. People are lonely because they do not try to be friendly.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. There is not much use in trying too hard to please people—if they like you, they like you.
24. \_\_\_\_\_ a. There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. Team sports are an excellent way to build character.
25. \_\_\_\_\_ a. What happens to me is my own doing.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ b. Sometimes I feel that I do not have enough control over the direction my life is taking.

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**Scoring Key for Project:** For each of the responses below, give yourself 1 point.

ITEM #	RESPONSE	ITEM #	RESPONSE	ITEM #	RESPONSE
1	a	10	b	19	a
2	a	11	b	20	a
3	b	12	b	21	b
4	b	13	a	22	b
5	b	14	b	23	b
6	a	15	b	24	a
7	a	16	a	25	b
8	a	17	b		
9	a	18	a		

Total Points \_\_\_\_\_

Your total number of points indicate the degree to which you view control as external or internal. The higher the score (above 15), the more you perceive control as external. The lower the score (below 15), the more you perceive control as internal. Now that you have totaled your score, you may want to refer back to the chapter discussion on Internal and External controls in order to interpret your results.

### **Discussion**

1. What are the benefits of being an Internal?
2. What are the advantages of being an External?
3. If you decided that you would rather be an Internal rather than an External, how would you go about changing yourself?
4. What did you learn from this activity?

