



Introduction

I believe it was the Buddha who said “let go of your desires.” This book is not intended to be particularly Buddhist in nature or to promote any particular religious belief. This book was not written with the intention of giving anyone advice or to tell anyone what he or she should do in life. This book is not necessarily a typical “How To” book. That does not mean that I am being uncertain or ambiguous in any way. To sit here and preach to others in terms of what they should do, what they should think, or what they should believe could be interpreted as controlling. Control is all around us: Husbands and wives, boyfriends and girlfriends, parents and kids, teachers and students, your boss, certain entities. If I were to come to anyone and say “You really need to do A, B, and C with your life,” that would be controlling. This book was written to present each chapter and let the readers decide for themselves what to think, say, or do. I welcome readers to interpret each chapter in their own way. My goal is for readers to be able to gain “recognition” or insight into how control or an excessive need for it can affect their lives and the lives of those around them. Before one can begin to make changes--make any kind of positive move or affirmative action--one must first become aware of “what” the problem is. “Recognition” (so they say) is the first step. Many forms of control are very subtle and difficult to spot. Once people can recognize the unhealthy forms of control around them, then it is their decision to do what they think is right. Everyone’s life is different.

Joseph Campbell in his “Power of Myth” PBS television lecture series suggested that reaching nirvana means not having to live being ruled by fear or desire. This book discusses and explains the many forms of control using practical and realistic examples. It will not only help you understand how anyone can be controlled by fear and desire, but by people and things as well. In his lectures, Campbell suggested that we are never really free, but by learning how to live unaffected by fear and desire we can reach nirvana. This book will also help you free yourself of unhealthy and unnatural forms of control and show you how (as Joseph Campbell said) to “follow your bliss” and reach elevated levels of happiness and potential that you never knew existed.

In a traditional sense, control (or the excessive need for it) is sometimes referred to as compulsive behavior. Exactly where or when in life compulsive behavior begins can vary. Perhaps it is learned. Perhaps it is innate. Compulsive behavior or an excessive need for control may be temporary, perhaps the result of a certain situation or crisis. It can be chronic or long-term. I once heard it said that a child’s first attempts to avoid stepping on a crack in the sidewalk (“step on a crack breaks your mother’s back”), may be the beginning of superstitious or compulsive behavior. I am talking about the idea of control or the excessive need to establish one’s will over external events, people, or things.