

The Cost of Control

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If you believe in control and believe that you have your situation under control, here is a general trigger warning: you might not. And if you have severe issues with anxiety and panic attacks, you may want to skip this post. The information is important, but you being able to function is more important.

Control is the snake oil that costs us our Soul.

We're told that we need control if we're to find success, love, and safety. In reality, the more that we pursue this control to accomplish our goals, the more interdependent on corruption these things become, causing us to become more anxious.

The human decision-making experience and free will are more of a game of limited input and post-rationalization than total control. While it's spooky to admit in public, when we're in private or with close friends, we recognize this freely. The awkward things we say and do but can't actually explain. The not speaking up even though we have the answer. There are plenty of instances where we all feel like we're watching life float by on a screen with a controller that doesn't quite seem to work.

Believing in control clashes with this reality, creating massive blind spots and anxieties we've never fully understood. Yet most of us find ourselves in this position. Some of us may admit to ourselves that we're nowhere near in control of our lives or moment-to-moment thoughts and

decisions, but act like we are anyways in plain dishonesty. Either way, participating with the control paradigm fundamentally corrupts us. What starts as a personal illusion becomes the foundation of entire civilizations—until both the rulers and the ruled are equally deluded.

However, the alternative is blatantly dangerous in authoritarian societies. To be out of the control is the cardinal sin of civilized people, which we'll come to find has to do more with being compliant than cultured. Regardless of who is operating on better morality, the people who believe in control have the most influence for now, and that means its dangerous to challenge perceptions of control.

But fuck it, we're doing it anyways.

In this post, I'll start by exploring what it means when I say control is an illusion, and how choosing to buy into it forces your subconscious to develop biases that continue to reinforce that reality to you.

The next section will explore how the biases and beliefs we develop when believing in control create the traumatic experience of "losing control".

Which will lead into how western society has gone completely mad, violently addicted to a sense of control that doesn't meaningfully exist in reality.

The rulers think they have control while the ruled think they are under control. Both are completely fucking looney tunes and totally unaware of how reality and human behavior works while blaming each other for all their respective stresses.

Finally, I'll explain how we can restore both our own and society's sanity by embracing what control was always a mimicry of: masterful influence.

Once again, if you're prone to anxiety and panic attacks, don't blame me if you have one. Although I think clarity may honestly help you find some more permanent ground~

Dispelling the Illusion

Control is a mirage—an idea that only seems real because we've been conditioned to believe in it.

From birth, we're handed a script: control your thoughts, control your actions, control your future. Success, happiness, and security all hinge on your ability to take control of your life. If you struggle, it's because you weren't disciplined enough. If things fall apart, it's because you *lost* control. If you suffer, it's your own fault for failing to grasp the reins tightly enough.

But look closely, and the cracks start to show.

We've all had moments that expose the lie—times when we said something we immediately regretted, when emotions overtook us, when we hesitated even though we *knew* what we should have done. Every time we experience these lapses, we glimpse the truth: our "control" over ourselves is nowhere near as complete as we pretend. And yet, we rationalize it away. We blame it on stress, on a lapse in judgment, on some external factor. Anything to maintain the illusion. Because the alternative—the idea that we were never really in control to begin with—is terrifying.

But once you accept this, something shifts.

You start to see control for what it really is: *a story told by those who benefit from it*. The corrupt need control, because control is the mechanism that keeps their power intact. Their influence isn't based on fairness, truth, or wisdom—it's based on their ability to manipulate perception, to dictate the narrative, to enforce their will while making sure the rest of us are too busy chasing personal control to challenge them.

This is why we're inundated with horror stories of what happens when control is lost. Economic collapse. Societal breakdown. Personal failure. As if *losing control* is the worst thing that could happen. But notice who benefits from that fear. Notice who remains unchallenged while everyone else obsesses over their own personal stability. The moment you step back and see the bigger picture, the illusion starts to shatter.

And what starts as a personal illusion becomes the foundation of entire civilizations—until both the rulers and the ruled are equally deluded. The powerful believe they can maintain control over entire nations, economies, and populations, even as reality constantly slips through their fingers. The people believe they are being controlled, submitting to a weight that only exists because they continue to uphold it. No one questions the fundamental lie, because questioning it would unravel everything.

This is what makes the hardest thing ever so easy, though; once you recognize that control is a construct, you're free.

Because you stop playing the game. You stop buying into the endless cycles of self-blame and forced discipline, the anxiety of keeping things in check, the constant, exhausting battle to *maintain* control. Instead, you begin to work *with* reality, not against it. You stop chasing the impossible and start focusing on what's actually within reach—your influence, your adaptability, your ability to navigate the shifting tides of life rather than trying to force the ocean into a shape that will never hold.

This is the first step toward reclaiming your mind. Because only once we let go of the lie can we finally see the world as it is.

And once we do that, we can begin to unravel the real damage—the trauma that comes from a lifetime of believing in control, and the ways it has been used to keep us afraid, ashamed, and compliant.

But if this were easy, we would of done it. Other people would be openly doing it. So why the hold up?

The Trauma of Control and Rugged Individualism

The greatest deceit of control isn't just that it's an illusion—it's that it turns suffering into a personal failure.

From the moment we're old enough to understand the world, we're taught that control is both possible and necessary. We're told that if we work hard, stay disciplined, and make the "right" choices, we'll succeed. That if we just control our emotions, our thoughts, our time, our reputation, our relationships—then happiness and security will follow.

But the moment something slips? The moment life doesn't go according to plan? It's *your* fault.

This is the trauma of control: not only does it create a terrifying experience of *losing* control, but it also convinces you that this loss is a moral failure.

Because if you ever had control to begin with, then surely you *chose* to lose it.

- If you lost your job, you must have been lazy.
- If your relationship fell apart, you must have done something wrong.
- If you're struggling with mental health, you must not be trying hard enough.
- If you're poor, you must have made bad choices.

This is the foundational lie of rugged individualism in a corrupt society: that suffering is a personal defect rather than a systemic consequence. That instead of questioning the structures that exploit us, we should simply work harder to master control within them.

And if we can't? Then we deserve our suffering.

This is how control functions as a weapon. Not just by making us chase an unattainable illusion, but by making us believe that every failure, every hardship, every moment of helplessness is our own doing. This is how control isolates us. It turns systemic injustice into personal shame. It forces us to internalize guilt rather than recognizing corruption. It keeps us from rebelling because we're too busy blaming ourselves.

But the reality is, most of what happens to us—our successes, our failures, our very thoughts—aren't entirely under our control. We are products of our environment, our genetics, our experiences, and a million other forces we don't consciously perceive. The idea that we are fully independent actors, masters of our own fate, is comforting but false.

And when this illusion of control inevitably breaks, the trauma of control is revealed. The panic attack. The breakdown. The crushing realization that no matter how much you planned, how much you sacrificed, how much you *tried*—you were never actually in control to begin with.

This is why we see the most devout believers in control react so violently when their authority is questioned, when the economy collapses, when their carefully constructed lives fall apart. Control isn't just an idea they hold—it's their entire identity. And when it shatters, they have nothing left.

But what if the problem was never losing control? What if the real issue was believing in it in the first place?

What if the real path to peace isn't in clinging to control, but in stepping into something far more powerful: *influence*?

But more on the solution in a bit, I want to explain how control has corrupted the entirety of globalized society.

The Madness of Western Society

A society built on control is a society built on delusion. And nowhere is this more evident than in the modern West, where the obsession with control has reached a fever pitch, severing any real connection to reality.

We see it in our institutions. Governments that believe they can legislate their way into absolute order. Corporations that think they can algorithmically engineer human behavior. Law enforcement that insists total compliance is the same as justice. Every centralized power structure operates under the same fundamental error: that control is real, that it can be maintained indefinitely, and that any disruption is an existential threat rather than an inevitable part of existence.

We see it in individuals. The people who believe their wealth, status, or intellect grants them dominion over their own fate. The influencers who meticulously curate their image to maintain the illusion of a perfect life. The professionals who sacrifice their mental and physical health in pursuit of a stability that never actually comes. The leaders who double down on failing strategies rather than admit that control was never theirs to begin with.

But control doesn't create security. It creates fragility.

When a society is built on the illusion of control, every disruption—no matter how small—is treated as a catastrophe. A single economic downturn, a political scandal, a shift in cultural norms, and suddenly the people who thought they had control are scrambling, desperate to reassert dominance. This is why authoritarianism isn't imposed by tyrants alone—it emerges as a natural consequence of individuals who believe control is the only way to maintain order.

Western society isn't just addicted to control; it's terrified of anything that suggests it doesn't actually exist. This is why our culture is obsessed with punishment, blame, and moralizing. The idea that bad things happen because of bad choices makes people feel safe. It allows them to believe that if they simply make the *right* choices, they can avoid suffering.

This is why the most devout believers in control will always side with the system, no matter how corrupt it is. It's not because they think the system is just—it's because the alternative is too terrifying to contemplate. To admit that control is an illusion is to admit that their entire worldview is based on a lie. That their success was never entirely their own doing. That their safety was never guaranteed. That their suffering, should it ever come, won't be prevented by their good choices, but merely by luck.

And so, they cling to control. They defend broken systems. They punish those who question them. They beg their rulers to crack down harder, to restore the illusion, to maintain the lie—because to confront the truth would require confronting the full weight of their own helplessness.

This is how Western society has gone completely insane.

The rulers think they have control. The ruled think they are under control. Both are living in a fantasy, completely disconnected from the way reality and human behavior actually function. And the longer this delusion persists, the more extreme the responses become. More laws. More surveillance. More propaganda. More punishment. Anything to avoid admitting that the system itself is built on sand.

But the answer has never been more control. The answer is to embrace what control was always a mimicry of: *masterful influence*. Because the world doesn't move according to the dictates of control—it moves according to the currents of influence. And only those who recognize this will ever be truly free.

Surfing The Void

Letting go of control feels like stepping off a cliff into nothingness. We've been taught that without control, there's only chaos—that if we don't keep a tight grip, we'll be swallowed whole. But this is just another lie we were sold to keep us afraid.

Because the truth is, once you release control, you don't fall. You *flow*.

The world has never been under anyone's control. Not yours, not your government's, not the most powerful elites who think they pull the strings. Reality moves like the ocean—unpredictable, vast, and completely indifferent to our desires. But that doesn't mean we're powerless. It means we have to stop trying to *command* the ocean and start learning how to *surf*.

Control is brittle. It shatters under pressure. But *influence* is fluid, adaptive, and infinitely more powerful. Those who understand influence don't waste energy trying to stop the waves; they ride them. They move with the natural flow of reality instead of against it. They recognize that no single moment, no single event, no single decision will ever give them complete mastery—but the way they navigate *all* moments determines their true power.

And here's the secret: influence reaches further than control ever could.

A leader obsessed with control micromanages every detail, suffocating the people around them. A leader who understands influence inspires others to act in ways they never could have dictated. A person who clings to control manipulates, coerces, and forces compliance. A person who embraces influence shapes the world naturally, through the sheer force of their presence, their choices, and their understanding of momentum.

The reason society is so addicted to control is because it promises *certainty*. Influence doesn't make that promise. Influence isn't absolute—it's dynamic, shifting, and unpredictable. But influence is also *real*. Control is a mirage, an exhausting uphill battle that will always be lost in the end. Influence, on the other hand, *grows*. It compounds. It ripples outward in ways you can't always predict but can learn to trust.

And once you embrace influence, everything changes.

Suddenly, failure isn't catastrophic—it's just another wave to navigate. Conflict isn't an existential threat—it's an opportunity to redirect energy. Losing something doesn't mean losing *everything*—it means making space for something new. The desperation, the panic, the white-knuckle grip on life all fade away, because you're no longer trying to *own* the ocean. You're just learning how to ride it.

And here's the paradox: the moment you stop grasping for control, the more power you actually have. Because you're no longer wasting energy resisting reality—you're working with it. You stop fearing change, stop fearing uncertainty, stop fearing the unknown. Because now, you *trust* your ability to move through it.

This is what terrifies those who cling to control. They see someone who is unshaken by fear, someone who moves freely where they are rigid, someone who wields power without needing to *grip* it. And they realize—consciously or not—that they've spent their whole lives trapped in a prison of their own making.

The world isn't something to be controlled. It never was.

The only question is whether you'll keep exhausting yourself trying to hold back the tide, or whether you'll finally start surfing the void.

Taking the Next Steps

Once you see through the illusion of control, you can't unsee it. And at first, that can feel like standing in the wreckage of a world you thought you understood. If you're not in control—of yourself, your emotions, or your circumstances—then what *are* you supposed to do? Just let life happen to you? Just let emotions run wild? Just let society dissolve into chaos?

Not at all. Letting go of control isn't surrendering to disorder—it's *mastering flow*.

You don't *control* your emotions, but you *influence* them. That's what emotions are: currents of energy moving through you, shaped by experience, memory, and perspective. When you stop wasting effort trying to suppress, deny, or micromanage them, you can finally *work with them*. Fear becomes awareness. Anger becomes fuel. Sadness becomes depth. Instead of fearing what you feel, you learn to *steer* it—to understand where it's coming from and where you want to take it.

And the same applies to the world around us.

Right now, society is a pressure cooker of manufactured control. Everyone is gripping so tightly—desperately trying to control their image, their success, their relationships, their politics, their security. We enforce rigid rules on ourselves and each other, convinced that if we just *controlled a little more*, everything would be fine. But all it does is create conflict. We're all bumping into each other's artificial barriers, each of us locked in an invisible battle to *prove* we have things under control.

But what happens when people stop trying to control themselves and each other?

The tension disappears. The constant need to posture, perform, and enforce artificial order dissolves. People stop being threats to one another and start becoming collaborators. Without the rigid need to control every conversation, every outcome, every perception, we can finally focus on *what actually matters*: building trust, fostering real safety, and creating systems that work for human beings instead of against them.

This is how real power works.

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t's not about forcing compliance—it's about *shaping movement*. It's not about control—it's about *harmony*. Once enough of us let go, the world itself shifts. The hidden conflicts, the social anxieties, the self-destructive cycles all start to evaporate, and we're left with something infinitely better: a world that moves *with* us, not against us.

And that starts with you.

Not with controlling your thoughts. Not with controlling your behavior. But with *understanding* them. Influencing them. Shaping them like a sculptor shapes clay, not by forcing, but by guiding. And once you master that, you'll see the truth:

You were never powerless. You just needed to stop gripping so tightly.

Now, take a deep breath.

And start shaping the world.