

Episode 77: Control-Absence of Responsibility

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[00:02:48]

Greetings and welcome to ConneXions Classroom. I'm Jodi Hildebrandt. We are going to be talking about control. Today is February 25th, 2017, and I want to pose some questions to you about control, like what is control? And why do we as humans engage in controlling behavior? And what are the outcomes, like what are the "benefits" that we seem to receive by engaging in controlling postures and controlling behaviors?

I have been asked by many people to do a podcast on why all of us engage in controlling behaviors. There isn't a person on the planet that hasn't and doesn't engage in control. And so, my hope is by the time you get done listening to this podcast, if you are someone who is sitting there thinking *I don't do that, I don't control*, that by the time you're done listening to this, you will say *oh ok, I guess I do engage in controlling behaviors and controlling thoughts*.

Because if you are listening to this and you come away and say *I still don't do that*, then your angle—I would call it actually denial—your denial about your behavior and your thought process that you don't control is the reason why I'm doing this kind of podcast. Those of us who are unaware of how we exhibit or act out in controlling manners or ways, are the ones who are inadvertently harming and creating negatives affects, not only on yourself, but on other people. You engage in inappropriate, arrogant, and prideful behavior. And because we aren't willing to stop when we're in a controlling posture (when we're unaware)—because we're not able to stop and reflect and think and contemplate and acknowledge that I'm engaging in control, I inadvertently hurt people, starting with myself.

So again, if you've listened to this podcast and you still don't think that you engage in control at any point in your life, you are in denial because controlling behavior is a characteristic of being human; there's no way to not engage in controlling behavior because you're not able to be aware of yourself all the time. And so, it's not a bad thing if you engage in control, it's a human thing. **And** we are all responsible to become aware as much as possible to why we are engaging in control, who we engage in control with, what are our triggers that invite us into this controlling dynamic or dance with ourselves or someone else? So we can become conscious! Because I don't know about how but I don't want to be unaware and then harm myself or negatively affect, or act prideful or arrogant towards anyone. I don't want that. I want to be able to stop, reflect, think, contemplate, and acknowledge that I am engaging in controlling behavior, and then change. Because all of us—all of us—engage in behaviors and thoughts of control.

This doesn't mean you've got a stickie on your forehead that suggests or states that you're bad; it's just human and we're all responsible to be sensitive and conscious, and awake, and aware to when we engage in it, so we can get back to reality and Truth and clean up or repent around my controlling behaviors and thoughts.

Control is a desperate attempt to not feel. What is control? Control is a desperate attempt to not feel. Not feel what? I try to control feelings of discomfort, of things that I don't want, feelings of me being stupid, or inadequate, or unseen, or not loved, or any other feeling that would cause you to begin to think that you were not enough. That's the reason why we engage in controlling behavior, is that I want to experience a different emotion because the emotion that I'm getting ready to feel is really uncomfortable.

So, what is control? Or what indicates that we're entering into this illusion that we can control anything other than my own thoughts, feelings, and choices? Let me say that again. When I go into a place of control—other than I am responsible or I can “control” my own thoughts, feelings, and choices—other than that, if I engage in controlling behavior I will be entering into an illusion. There's one being that I can control, which is me. And I'm only able to control my own thoughts, my own perceptions, and my own choices. That's it. Everything else that I engage in that I attempt to control will be an illusion. It will be a fantasy. What I'm telling myself is that I have this magical power that I can control you, I can control that, I can control those, and the Truth is, I can't.

I'm using the word control in two different ways. One is control of self, which is in Truth and Reality, and then I'm also using the word control inside of a place of distortion, which is not Reality. And I'm going to explain that in a minute.

There are these two ways to define and describe control, because for the purpose of this podcast, I want all of us to be clear which control we're discussing. Like I said, there are two different definitions of control.

[00:09:30] Distorted Control

Definition number one is in distortion or an absence of Reality. The first use of the word *control* is from a position of personal irresponsibility and aggression towards self and others. And when I say aggression, I don't just mean overt aggression, it could be covert aggression like being really passive-aggressive. This first definition is from a position of personal irresponsibility and aggression towards yourself and towards another person. This type of control is all about forcing, coercing, manipulating, or defrauding a person, a thing, an experience, an event to be the way that **I** want it to be. To be the way or what I want them to be. And this is where the illusion comes in.

I cannot **make** something or someone be a certain way. I only have responsibility for me. So I drop my responsibility and I go into this illusion that says *oh, I can control that, or them, or it, or those, because I refuse to manage my own thoughts, my own emotions, my own choices. I will instead choose to attempt to control, force, manipulate, coerce everyone and everything around me so that I can have this illusion that **I can get what I want.***

Here's an example. *“I will make you do it my way because I know more than you and my way is better.”* That’s a controlling statement. And those of you who have been listening for a period of time, you probably can hear the self-adulation—the distortion has the flavor of self-adulation. *I will make you do it my way because I know more than you and my way is better.* That’s an example of control in a self-adulating posture.

Here’s an example of control in a self-denigrating posture. *“I can't ever do things right, will you do it for me?”*

So, both of those examples are in distortion. And remember, distortion is an absence of the Truth, an absence of Reality. I have distorted Reality. That’s definition number one of control.

[00:11:52] Control in Truth & Reality

Here's definition number two of control—but this is the word *control* inside of a sentence that has Truth and Reality in it. The second use of control is from a position of being completely **responsible** for myself and choosing and acting from a place of appropriateness and personal honesty. The first definition was about distortion—me dropping personal responsibility—and the second definition is about me being completely responsible for myself and choosing and acting from a place of appropriateness and personal honesty. So, I'm being honest about and responsible for my thoughts, my feelings, and my choices.

Here's an example. *I will not force you to do things my way. I'm responsible for me, and it is inappropriate for me to think or act in any way that would force, or coerce, or threaten another person to think, feel, choose, or act in a way that is contrary to their own personal morals and beliefs, whether I feel like I know more than them or not.* So, I took the statement and flipped it into a place of Truth and Reality.

The second example. *Saying, “I can't ever do things right” is not the Truth. I do struggle with certain things and circumstances and I can ask for help and instruction and try again. I am responsible for myself.*

So, when you hear me use that word “control,” I’m going to be using it in the first definition—the definition of distortion—because that is the type of control that we as humans keep engaging in. Another way to say that is, this is the type of illusion that we engage in to try to change the way that we feel and do things from a position of how I want things to show up according to me.

In this podcast, I want to focus on the distorted sense of control which means or indicates that I’ve abdicated, dropped my responsibility for or to myself and I’ve entered into this fantasy that I have the ability to control anything other than my own thoughts, feelings, and choices. I’m going to keep repeating that so that you understand that that is what you are responsible for and those are the only things that you can “control.” I can't even control the outcomes of my choices.

For example, after I choose, there is a consequence. Once my choice is made, the natural process of consequence and outcome is engaged, and outcome is out of my control. So, I literally can only manage or control my thoughts, feelings, and choices—not even the *outcomes* of my choices am I in control over.

Here's an example of being out of control—not being able to control. When you get too close to a fire, you will get burned. You can't control fire, you can't control the elements. You can't control if somebody's gossiping about you. So if somebody starts gossiping or you start gossiping, it could get back to the other person.

I eat more calories than I burn and I will gain weight. That is an outcome of choices I make, that I can't control. I go to bed late and I lose sleep from the next day. I speed and I get a ticket. I walk into a puddle and my feet get wet. I put a photo on my social media and I can never take it off. I look at pornography and it creates a false sense of sex and sexuality. I go outside in 20-degree weather without a coat and I will be cold. I perceive that I'm stupid and I won't feel confident at school or work. I believe someone's distorted thoughts about myself and I will feel less than.

There are all these examples. There are millions of examples of things that go on in the world that I just don't have any control over as far as their behavior. But I *do* have control over how I perceive things. So when someone goes into distortion and they want to say something mean about me or whatever, I can't control the fact that they're doing that. But I can control, remember your thoughts, your feelings, your choices, so I can control how I perceive that and I don't have to go to a place of reaction because I can frame that in a different manner by saying, “That's not about me.” Or, “That's really unfortunate that they're choosing to be aggressive or mean spirited.”

The control this podcast is focusing on is the distorted type of control, the control that drops personal responsibility because I, the being, refuse to be accountable for my own thoughts, emotions, and choices, and instead I attempt to control—which is the distortion, which means I go into an illusion—everyone and everything around me, including I feel like I am able to be inside of an illusion around whatever is going on inside my life. And the Truth is that I can't.

When I enter into this place of control or this illusion, I will start feeling not loved or unseen. I'll experience or feel not enough. So to believe that you're not wanted or not known, or not important, or not valued, is why we start attempting to control. Those are the experiences / triggers that invite us into this posture of *I need to control the experience* because I believe that if I control the experience then I will start feeling valued, and loved, and enough, and wanted.

If I can control your perception of me, and wear a certain outfit, or say certain things, or act certain ways, then you will think that I'm valuable and you will feel like I'm important, and therefore **I'll** feel like I'm valuable and therefore **I'll** feel like I'm important. And so, I won't feel

the need to control you at that moment. But there's no Truth in that. Just because I wear something or do something that *you* want me to do—so I control you by figuring out what exactly what I need to do to make you love me, or want me, or feel like I'm desirable—even though I do that in that moment and I might feel emotions of love, and wanted, and being seen, it's not real, it's an illusion because as soon as I don't wear stuff like that or don't act the way that you want me to, I go back to feeling not enough.

So, this is the reason why all of us engage in this controlling behavior. It's that simple. I'm trying to control these distortions that keep telling me that I'm not of worth, that I don't matter, that I'm not enough, that I'm inadequate, that my needs don't matter. That's what we're trying to do. And inside that, I feel fear, I feel emotion of unworthiness and it scares me because if that is the Truth, then I have to somehow control that because I can't be unworthy, it just scares me too much. And so, I keep engaging in controlling behaviors—or another way to say that, again, is illusionary behaviors so that I have this belief (which is false) that I'm enough. It's that simple.

Look at how you control and then trace it back to why you are doing the things that you're doing. When you see why you're controlling, it will always come back to *I don't want to feel, I don't want to be responsible, I don't want to believe, or experience the terror of not being connected, or not being valued, or not being witnessed, or not being validated by someone, not being loved.* That's the reason we engage in control. The Truth is, is that all of those beliefs, like I'm not enough, I'm not worthy, I'm not adequate—all those things are lies. Even if you don't have a whole slew of friends, you still are valued, and loved, and wanted, and needed. And if it's only by your maker, by God, if that is the only person on the planet that loves, and values, and sees you, and validates you, you *are* seen by Him. And there's a high likelihood there's at least one other person that feels that way about you as well.

So you get to start challenging this conclusion, if you're willing. And those of who you do, who challenge this posture of being controlling, are the people that are willing to let go of this illusion of control.

I hope that you'll be one of those people, that you'll start challenging those.

[00:22:22] Control & Humility

There probably are some people who are listening to this that say, “That doesn't happen to me. I don't feel unloved, or unvalued, or not seen, or not witnessed.” I guarantee you that in some part of your life, either past or present, you have experienced those kinds of feelings. And maybe you're in a place right now of denial, where you won't allow yourself to feel those feelings, it's kind of like you go into a prideful and arrogant spot—which is also controlling. We're going to talk about this here in a minute.

So, you might be challenging what I'm saying and saying, “I don't agree with that.” And those of

who you are doing that are typically the most controlling people among us. Those people who go into this *I don't have that experience, I've never experienced that, that isn't something that goes on with me* are typically the most controlling people. And so, because I don't know who all is listening, you're going to have to diagnose yourself, but please be very humble about this because those of us that refuse to acknowledge that we are controlling or that we engage in the dynamic of controlling relationships—because even though I may not see myself as controlling, maybe I see myself as allowing myself to be controlled. If I am being controlled, I am still engaging in controlling behavior.

And so, if you can't see it in you, the only way you're going to know if you're not controlling is that you'll be super humble, and you'll be very open, and you'll be very emotionally honest, and very responsible, and you'll look at all of your relationships, and you'll even go to your relationships and say, “Hey, relationships, do I act controlling?” Those are the best ways to find out if you're a controlling person because your relationships will tell you if you show up controlling.

I would invite you to go to all of your intimate relationships, and maybe even your relationships that aren't so intimate and ask them, “Do you feel like I control when I interact with you?” Because if you're just going to answer that question on your own, chances are you're not going to see it, and you will be one of those people that says, “Yeah, I don't do that. That doesn't apply to me.” And you will go back to, like I said at the very beginning, you will inadvertently harm yourself and other people because what you're saying is, “I'm not willing to humble myself. I'm not willing to become aware of how I'm affecting other people.”

If that's where you're at, that's fine, and you get to understand and know this Truth for yourself: that you're not willing to look at yourself. Hopefully, you'll humble, you'll stop controlling yourself, and you'll become contemplative and curious about each time you engage in thoughts and behaviors, and look for the Truth. Look and see if there's Truth in your thoughts and behaviors because if there's not, and you're in distortion, you *will* be controlling, and you will be inside of an illusion. You will believe that you can control other people and other things. And you cannot.

At any point in time we as humans are always in one state or the other. Either we're in this place of controlling or we're in a place of not controlling. It all is dependent upon our choices and upon our consciousness, really. Most of us who are controlling are not super conscious that we're doing it. So which state we're in depends on our choices. We choose whether we want to acknowledge this or not. We choose which state we're going to experience. Those of us that refuse to humble and be emotionally honest and therefore responsible for themselves and their own choices *will* spend their time—and possibly their whole—life living in this state of control. Which would be super sad because control makes it so that you can't have an intimate, connected relationship. And the reason we'll stay in that place of control is because we're unwilling to

humble and really look at ourselves, and so we will have a lack of personal willingness to stop, and reflect, and consider something other than what *we* think. We will not be able to see anything else other than what we think and believe to be the Truth—regardless of whether it's the Truth or not.

I hope that you are not one of those people. I keep inviting you. I hope that whoever is listening to this will stop and go to those relationships and say, “Do you see me behaving in a controlling way? Do you feel controlled by me?” Ask your relationships because you just looking at yourself, you probably won't see it unless you are skilled at reflecting and being contemplative about self. But go to your relationships, go to people that are willing to be honest with you. If you go to relationships like with your kids, people who you have power over, they may not tell you the Truth. So go to those people that have a history of being honest with you.

Those of us who are willing to consider, and be curious, and contemplative, and acknowledge our choices and the outcomes that have been created, can see our consequences and choose to change them if they reflect controlling behavior.

[00:28:37] Truth vs. True

Let's talk about true and Truth are, because we need to go back and forth to what the Truth is versus what is true. Let's start with Truth.

Truth is about the facts. It's about being objective, it's about information that is knowable by a third party, it's about learning eternal principles, like there's so much time that we have, all of us are dictated to by time and dates. We're all vulnerable. We experience things and emotions and they are neutral. Emotions are not good or bad. Truth is about concrete. It's not about someone else's opinions or emotions. The Truth is the car is blue. The Truth is it's 75 degrees outside. The Truth is it's June 18th. The Truth is I was late to my meeting today. Those are things that are unchanging and empirical, impersonal, and can't be changed by someone's opinions or emotions. That's what Truth is.

Here's what **true** is. When I go into what is true, I go into the subjective, I go into things that are changeable, I go into opinions, and feelings, and perceptions, and meanings. I go into things that are not based in facts; they're interpretations.

Here are some examples of true. Things can be changed because information, and feelings, and perceptions change. *The car is ugly.* Juxtapose it with *the car is blue.* *It's hot in the room,* versus *it's 75 degrees.* *It's a great day,* in comparison to *today is June 18th.* *I'm stressed and that's why I was late,* versus *I was late to a meeting.*

All of these things can invite us into distortion, and consequently control when we go into *true* rather than *Truth*. Let me say that again. When we go into things that have *true* in them, like are

true, things that are subjective, our opinions, our interpretations, our meanings, our emotions, things that are not based in fact, we can go into distortion. And when we go into distortion, we attempt to control because distortion will tell us things that are painful, and so we try to control that.

My invitation to you is about living inside humility, impeccable honesty, and personal responsibility. Those three characteristics will help you identify when you start controlling things. It will help you identify when you engage in controlling behaviors because what you'll be willing to do is say, "Why did I do that?" You'll be curious, you'll contemplate and say, "Why did I do that? Why did I say that? Why am I acting this way? How come I just cooked a bunch of eggs and refused to wash the pan? Why don't I want to wash the pan? Because I've been washing it every time that people use the pan and I've only used it a couple of times and so it's their turn to wash it."

Now, all of that might be the Truth. However, I am engaging in a controlling posture, saying, "I shouldn't have to do this." The issue is that it's not about whether I should or I shouldn't have to do something, the issue is that I used the pan and I caused it to become dirty, and so it is reasonable when you're in a relationship that you wash what it is that you've caused to become dirty.

So, living outside of Truth—we just described what Truth is—living outside of Truth, or consciousness, or Reality, or vulnerability is a very scary, dangerous place. And being there or staying there will mean that you may not see what you are controlling or attempting to control, because you're not willing to be honest, responsible, and humble. It takes being willing to be honest, responsible, humble to see clearly and stop the control.

Are you willing to do that? That's my question to you. Are you willing to keep asking yourself the honest questions and be responsible for your answers and be responsible for your behaviors and be responsible for your emotions? Are you willing to do that? You need to think. Don't react to what I'm saying. I'm not here to upset you or poke you, I'm not here to cause you to take something personal. I'm hoping to upset the mechanism of control in your life—not you.

Now, you activate the mechanism of control, so you've got to separate that. I'm trying to get into your psyche and invite you, and make it so that you become interested in such a way that you will start challenging the way that you think. I'm hoping to upset that mechanism inside your life so you can use your gift of choice and change. Because all of us engage in control, all of us. And the goal I would hope is that as you become more conscientious, you will engage in it fewer and fewer times.

Because we all engage in control to some degree or another, we are all responsible to pay attention to our thoughts and feelings we have, and become curious about them. And ask, "Is what I just did honest? Is it responsible? Is it humble?" If not, it's going to be controlling. If

what I just did is not responsible, honest, and humble, it's going to be controlling and that means that you've just entered into an illusion. But you can stop that, you can get out because when you go into that illusion, you're not really controlling what you think that you're controlling.

[00:36:08] Emotional Honesty

Let's talk specifically about what emotional honesty is. I keep talking about, "Are you willing to be honest, responsible, humble?" Let's talk about emotional honesty. Honesty means to be free from deception, free from distortion. It means to be genuine, truthful, full of integrity, reputable, frank, honorable, real, credible, and just. Look at yourself and ask *am I those characteristics listed above? Do my choices and behaviors reflect those characteristics?*

Honesty can be shown through outward indicators such as paying your bills on time, being willing to follow through with your commitments that you make to yourself and others, telling the Truth about something even though you'll have to have an uncomfortable outcome, being willing to return money that you find in the parking lot of a store, not using a service that you're unwilling or unable to pay for, not taking something that's not yours, not engaging in gossip, standing up for what you believe and value in the face of adversity, giving support and validation for those less fortunate than you are in any capacity. Those are just a sprinkling of ways to be honest with yourself.

How is **emotional** honesty different from just being honest? It is different in that it means we need to pay attention to our emotions and learn to be honest about them, with ourselves and with others. We as people don't usually pay much attention to our emotions, and if we aren't conscious of our emotions which are attached to our motives, our emotions can "run us" and often make our choices for us. We can react in unconscious manners instead of being responsible and conscious.

Emotional honesty is incredibly important because what it does is it allows me to stay aware of what it is that I'm thinking and what it is that I'm feeling, and then make a deliberate decision towards being honest and responsible instead of just getting reactionary.

[00:38:14] Personal Responsibility

Let me read to you what personal responsibility is. Rigorous personal responsibility is a constant, thorough examination of myself. It is an attitude that says *I'm responsible for me, I'm responsible for what I think, how I feel, how I perceive, what I want, what I choose to do, and how I behave. It all falls on my shoulders, what type of experience I will have in life.*

Personal responsibility is multifaceted. It means I am emotionally honest, I feel and express my emotions—even the intense and uncomfortable ones—and I'm curious about them. I don't blame others for my feelings or try to avoid emotional discomfort. Personal responsibility means I

meet my needs, my obligations, and my commitments emotionally, spiritually, and physically—in all ways. I take care of myself and I keep the commitments I make to myself and others. I show up consistently.

That is a quick glance at what emotional honesty means and personal rigorous responsibility means.

[00:39:25] Humility

Let's look at humility. Humility is that third characteristic that is absolutely imperative in order to be able to recognize whether you are in a controlling posture. So, humility is an acknowledgement that there is something greater than me, and my willingness to align my beliefs and my behaviors to that Reality. Humility is a choice to acknowledge mine and others' vulnerabilities, my weaknesses, mine and others' trespasses and offenses. It is a recognition that "I am the same as you." A humble person examines their behavior, desiring to understand and empathize with themselves and the other person. When I am humble, I am willing to give and receive feedback and change my behavior and beliefs to match the Reality and Truth. I am honest about my emotions, I do not hide them or stuff them, I am clear, and direct, and bold with myself and others about how I feel and how I perceive and think. Humility means taking complete and full responsibility for all of my emotions, all of my perceptions, my thoughts, my reactions, my choices, and their outcomes.

In addition, humility is surrendered, meaning there is no desire to control or force anyone or anything. Humility acknowledges and respects the power of choice within oneself and with others, and desires to teach self and others to make wise, empowering choices. A humble person does not need to "fix" or control others, does not need to fix or control problems, or take over when someone makes a choice they disagree with. The development of a person's agency, along with the desire to choose Truth, are the primary aims of humility.

Humility includes an openness and willingness to ask for help when I need it. In other words, it means acknowledging and fostering my ability to be emotionally vulnerable and open with people. Humility is a prerequisite to emotional honesty and personal responsibility. That last statement is very powerful—it (humility) is a prerequisite to be able to engage in honest and responsible behavior.

[00:41:38] Examples of Control

Now that we've set this thing up about what control is, why we engage in it, and why it's so important to be able to recognize it in yourself so that you don't continue to inadvertently harm you or harm another, I have a bunch of examples and I am very grateful to many, many people that I know of that were very willing to send their examples of how they control themselves and also people and things inside their relationships. I thank those many, many people, there were

probably 50 of them that I asked for them to humbly share with me how they have and do engage in controlling behaviors inside their relationships, and these are the statements that will follow.

Look at these examples and phrases of controlling statements and behaviors so you can become more familiar with what control sounds like and what it acts like.

When I go into distortion, I will go into one of two sides of distortion. I will either go into a state of self-denigrating or I will go into a state of self-adulating. Now, both of those positions are controlling. One seems more controlling than the other. One seems more like the controller which is self-adulating. And self-denigrating sounds more like I'm being controlled. However, both positions are engaging in control—it's the same stuff. It just feels, it has a flavor of one is more aggressive or more demonstrative than the other, but it's control in both of them.

I'm going to read probably more than a hundred statements here. I've put them into categories of self-denigration and self-adulation. However, depending on how someone says it, depending on their motive, depending on their language, depending on their tone, it could move from self-denigration to self-adulation or from self-adulation back to self-denigration. There is no pure self-denigration or pure self-adulation. It is all about controlling behaviors. But just to try to make this really simple and clear, I've put them into the best categories that I know how to put them in, but again, they could flip back and forth depending on motive of the person saying them.

Before I read these, someone said to me, "Jodi, what is the language for the rescuer?" I kind of know the language of the victim and I know the language for the persecutor. Victim typically shows up as self-denigrating and persecutor typically shows up as self-adulating, but people had a hard time understanding, what the rescuer sounds like? Well, the rescuer bounces back and forth between these two, and again, when you're in one of those positions, victim, persecutor, or controller (because that's the word for rescuer), when you're in one of those positions you're in all three of them.

Here is a large sampling of what controlling language sounds like. I'd get a piece of paper out and something to write with, and as I read these, I would write down which ones fits for you so that you can start recognizing why you're controlling and who you're trying to control, and reframe that back into Truth. Because the first person you're trying to control is you. You're the primary source of you're trying to control a distortion. But what's happening is that people around you are getting your shrapnel from your choices to control and it's hurting them.

I'm going to read through these. This is self-denigration.

- I'm responsible for you.
- It's my responsibility to make you happy. I'm a people-pleaser.

- I'm the teacher's pet. It's very important that the teacher recognize me so I do everything I can to manipulate the teacher into thinking I'm their pet.
- I don't deserve.
- I use language such as *we, us, our, let's*.
- I become a peacemaker.
- I don't say no.
- I don't know what I think and so I just let you make all the decisions.
- Saying yes without considering the outcomes or the viability of saying yes.
- Never turning down an assignment or request.
- Always smile and be happy.
- Ignoring when others don't do their part, which causes me stress and extra work, and I never confront them.
- I figure out the "right" way to approach a person or topic, so if I can use the "right" words they'll agree with me.
- Inside self-denigration I sigh a lot. Sighing is very controlling.
- I show up helpless, hopeless.
- I have expressions of just exacerbation.
- I feel fear. If I do something then something bad is going to happen.
- I don't confront other people.
- I match or mimic their personalities and presentations. I chameleon myself to make them think that I'm agreeable, or like them, or my opinions are the same.
- I withhold things. I withhold sex, I withhold food, I withhold praise, affection, validation, either towards myself or someone else.
- I refuse to self-advocate with the people I'm with when they express opinions or values I don't agree with. So someone says something and I don't agree with it and so I won't advocate for myself, I just sit there in silence and think *I don't want to say anything because they will get upset with me*. That's very controlling.
- I control what people think about how I look and my accomplishments.
- I control others' emotions to make my emotions their emotions.
- I make my kids happy by stepping between their choices and consequences.

- I control people's opinions of me so that they like me, so they'll approve of me. They'll think I'm nice, they'll think I'm a good person.
- My opinion doesn't matter. The only thing that's important is that these people like me and I agree with what they agree with.
- I attempt to over-share to get attention.
- I tell stories.
- I talk loudly.
- I try to be funny.
- Making smart comments.
- Fishing for compliments.
- I am always the one that's helping when someone is struggling.
- I am willing to lie to control a certain outcome.
- I'll stay silent when I know that I should speak and say what I think.
- I feign contentment when I'm really not content.
- I isolate.
- I criticize others but just in my head or with other people, like I gossip.
- I criticize the clothes that I wear, the words that I use, the way that I spend money, the food that I choose to eat.
- Using religion and spiritual language topics to manipulate other people.
- I hold grudges without forgiving.
- I won't give up old grievances.
- I compare weaknesses to other people or favorite sins.
- I use appearances. I look smashing or unkept to control.
- Finding support systems to validate my position.

Someone told me a story that she had a conflict or was having conflicts with her spouse and so she would go look up other people that had some authority that he would listen to, and then she'd cut those statements out of wherever she'd find them and she'd tape them up inside the windshield of his car so when he went to work he'd see them in the morning. So it's like, here's what I think and then here are some people you really respect, here's what they think, too. It would support her position.

- I engage in gender roles—like, men do this, women do this—to control.
- Nurture means that a woman sacrifices for her children and husband. So women's roles say that women must sacrifice for their children and husband—they're trying to control the perceptions of other people.
- Family traditions. I engage in family traditions, like we always do this so you must do this as well. We always go to Grandma's for Thanksgiving so you must come with us whether you're married or you have your own family, this is what we do. It's super controlling.
- The women of this family always wear nylons to church so you don't have a choice. It's the way that we do it. It's always been like this so don't ask questions.
- Other ways to control would be, look on the bright side, turn that frown upside down and smile, don't talk negatively.
- If you feel down, go out and serve someone, you'll forget yourself and feel better.
- Don't worry about that, it will all work out in the end.
- God will fix it, don't question, just trust, have faith.
- Appearing to be a hard worker, but you get up late and then you sneak out of your house so your roommates won't see that you slept in, and then you come home late and appear that you've been working all day. Really controlling, controlling perceptions.
- Enabling destructive behavior so a person won't feel bad. Like, someone makes choices that are really destructive and instead of confronting them and holding them accountable you tell them, "That's okay" or, "Boys will be boys," or, "I'm sure he didn't mean to," or, "Just make a different choice next time."
- Thinking that if I had X amount of money in the bank or make X amount of money a month or a year then I'll feel secure and be successful. This illusion that says *if I make a certain amount of money then I will be secure and successful*. That's very controlling.
- I want to control people thinking that I'm mean.
- I don't say what I really think because I don't want people to think that I'm mean.
- Giving a gift and the giver and the receiver extols the virtues of the gift over and over. They say things like, "It's perfect. It's exactly the thing I wanted, it's the right size, the right color. You wrapped it so beautifully. The bow was perfect." Just going on and on about this gift is very controlling.
- Saying what you think or want and then saying, "Well, I don't know. Whatever. It doesn't matter to me." So people do this all the time, they'll say, "I'd really like to go

here.” And then they’ll go, “But I don't care.” Or “It's fine,” or “Whatever you’d like to do.”

- If you say, “I'll be there in five minutes” when you know that you won't be there for fifteen minutes. Or you say, “I'm almost there” when you're really not.
- When children cry or are unhappy, I control by giving them what they want so I'm a good mom. If they're crying, it means something about my inability or incapability as a parent if they're upset and crying.
- I control by not calling people too much or they'll get sick of me.
- I don't hug people because it could expose me if they get too close.
- I control by keeping my life elusive, mysterious, by ever being busy so they can't know my schedule or they would coerce me to go spend time with them.
- I get people to talk about themselves so the spotlight is on them and it appears that I'm a great listener and confident, but I'm using them to hide behind and keep my expressions as neutral and unaffected as possible so people can't pick up on my distinctive personality traits or see how deeply I'm feeling.
- I memorize the clothes I wear with different people so I don't wear the same shirt too many times in their presence. I don't want them to think I like it.
- I hide my accomplishments from my family and my friends so they can't acknowledge me. They can't say they're proud of me.
- I want to be seen as the strong one so I don't show my vulnerabilities or ask for help when I need it.
- I act stupid, or naive, or unaware when people ask me certain questions.
- I make up stories in my head about what something means without finding out the facts.

All of those ways are very controlling.

Now I want to share with you the self-adulation side, which again is control. And you might hear some things and go, “Well, that’s self-denigration.” And like I said, they can be in both categories, but here are some real obvious self-adulating types of statements and postures that we pick up that are really controlling.

So again, recognize if you fit into any of these.

- Acting perfectionistic. When someone is attempting to be a perfectionistic, it is very interesting to see how many people will say, “Well, I'm just a perfectionist.” And I always say to them especially if they're in therapy, “Oh, so you're controlling.” And

they're like, "No, no, no. I'm a perfectionist. That's a good thing." Well, perfectionism means that you're going to be controlling. So if you're not willing to take responsibility for yourself that's fine but let's not talk about something that isn't in Reality, because you trying to be perfectionistic *does* mean you're trying to control things.

- I want people to be a certain way. That's another controlling posture. I want people to be nice to me, give what me what I want. I want people to be happy.
- I feel like I deserve.
- I want things to be fair.
- I hoard things.
- I talk really quietly to make people listen or say, "What? What?" I have people in my life that do that. It's like they barely talk and I'm constantly saying, "I didn't hear you." That's very self-adulating.
- I control the perception by way of getting angry.
- You engage in control by making me feel safe, enough, worthy, loved, see me, respect me. I don't want to be responsible for that so I want somebody else to make me feel safe enough, worthy, loved.
- I engage in addiction by reacting in anger, by reacting to ultimatums, demeaning somebody, sighing. I give people "the look," I act threatening, I control perceptions, like I'm good, I'm helpful, I'm righteous, I'm obedient, I'm trustworthy, not wanting them to feel anything uncomfortable around me.
- I use anger as a dictatorship.
- You should have what you want.
- Why didn't you do what I told you to do?
- I can't believe it.
- *You make me so angry, or you do this to me.* All this blaming posture.
- Insinuating things towards relationships.
- I want my meals ready at 6:00.
- You could have done this if you really loved me.
- You out-reason or you out-logic the other person. You just keep teaching them about stuff, like, I wrote down here, "you teach them to death." It's like, "Let me teach you about this. Let me explain this." That is very aggressive and very prideful to always be teaching your counterpart.

- You engage in fixing things instead of validating.
- You stare people down who have less power than you so they'll stop their whatever, their behavior, their choices to behave the way that they choose.
- You accuse of people of or you say, “You're making me feel a certain way.”
- You try to control perceptions by omitting details by lying, by emphasizing certain details, by leaving out certain details so that it will better your cause.
- You give people the silent treatment or you go into compliance or you go into a defensive posture.
- You raise your voice.
- You interrupt.
- You act physically aggressive.
- You blame.
- You justify.
- You twist words.
- You drop responsibility for your choices.
- You minimize the effects of experience to not feel the weight of the emotion.
- You engage in resentments because you don't want to be emotionally honest.
- You dig at what's going on inside someone and rescue them, instead of validating and inviting them into Truth.
- You tell yourself a story about someone and then say, “Serve them.” I tell myself a story about someone—so I tell myself something that's not the Truth about somebody, like “*They really need my help,*” or “*They can't do it this without me,*” or “*I need to stop what I'm doing and go over and help them.*” And then you show up like you're the hero. You make them feel better so you can feel better.
- Mom says we're poor so I want to give Mom my piggybank so she can feel better, so I go grocery shopping and stock the fridge and pantry with food. No one told me to stop and I felt like it was my responsibility as a team member to take care of my family even though I was a child. That's really self-adulating on the parent's end, Mom telling the child, “We're so poor. We don't have any food.” And causing the child to feel like they have to be responsible for a parent's responsibility. Very self-adulating from the parent's angle.
- Defining people as an insult. Example, you act just like your mother, you nag, nag, nag. So, telling people that they act like a certain person that would be insulting to them.

- You engage in avoidance and invalidation. You say things like, “What? I thought we already talked about this, why are you bringing it up again?” If someone wants to discuss something and instead of saying “Let’s discuss it,” you’re like, “Why are you doing this? We’ve already discussed it.” It’s very self-adulating.
- They say things like, “Don’t be so worried. It’s not a big deal.” All very invalidating.
- Or they say say, “You are the only one that is worried about this. No one else cares, so why do you? Just give it some time, time will heal all wounds. According to me or according to the handbook, it says (fill in the blank).”
- No one is perfect, your expectations are way too high, I’ll never live up to your expectations, no one is capable of living up to the way that you expect them to live up to. Those are all self-adulating statements.
- Conversations turn into lectures. Not checking out how people feel when you’re talking, and you just keep talking and talking and talking. Very adulating.
- Telling somebody, “I know what you’re thinking.” Wow, now you can mind read? Again, self-adulating.
- Not speaking up.
- Making multiple meals for one meal, many kinds of soups for one meal. I agreed and now I’m resentful and blaming the other woman. I’m mad at her kids for being picky, being prideful and acting like victims.
- I tell myself that I’m a better parent because my kids would never act like this, and I didn’t acknowledge my own boundaries.
- This person makes a commitment and then inside that commitment they realize that they really can’t keep the commitment so then they go into all this control saying, “I’m a bad parent. Why do the kids have to be picky? I can’t do this. This is unreasonable.” Lots of self-adulating instead of just saying, “I changed my mind, I’m not going to do it this way.”
- Telling yourself that you have to wash your face this way, you have to wash your hands this way, you have to clean your toys up this way, you have to fold the laundry this way, you have to iron your clothes this way.
- I have to make home-cooked meals even though I’m sick. Again, very self-adulating.
- Saying to myself *I know what they think, I know what they said, I know what they did, I know how they reacted.*
- Having people say to you, “Don’t you just feel radiant and energetic when you’re pregnant?”

- Having someone tell you how you feel or what you like.
- Parents speaking for children when they can speak for themselves. Or even friends or spouses speaking for each other when people can speak for themselves.
- Someone is upset and you use humor to distract them. Instead of validating their upset, you try to distract them.
- Not responding when someone says, “Stop,” or, “Don't do that,” or, “I don't like it.” Not responding to those kinds of statements is very self-adulating.
- When you procrastinate.
- Being passive.
- Or you say, “I know better than,” or, “You're less than.”
- You tell somebody they're incapable of.
- You give unsolicited feedback.
- You use “shoulds”—you should do this.
- You interrupt.
- You use the silent treatment.
- Talking to someone and they just want to control the outcome. For example, somebody's talking to you and they say, “I'm just really upset that you have chosen to do this again. Can you help me understand why you keep doing this?” And they just look at you and they won't speak. And you say, “Why aren't you talking to me?” And they just stare at you or they say, “I don't know.”
- People who break commitments.
- Using sarcasm when someone is trying to be serious.
- Going back to the silent piece, you are silent because people can't hurt you or invalidate you if they don't know what you're truly feeling.
- You justify disease and sickness by saying, “They act this way because their body is sick.” Somebody can not really be sick, but justifying it and saying that I am, or she's a good person, it's just the disease. So if somebody behaves badly and they say, well, they're depressed and that's why they get to behave this way. She's a good person, it's just the disease talking, it's just her anxiety talking.
- He really wants to love me, he's just not capable of it, he's not able to control his anger.
- Using sex in ways to control another person.

- I won't act like I know what's going on, I'll be unconscious, and then I'm not responsible for me. That's very passive.
- I say *I don't know*, or *I forgot*, or *I don't know what's best*, or *I want people to behave in a particular manner*.
- This is what you should do and what you should not do. And when they don't do it, you get angry.
- I cry to get my way.
- I try to control with words.
- I desire to control how fast my spouse gets ready for activities / work. And I try to control him being on the phone. I say, "Hey, you shouldn't be on the phone, this is not the right environment to be on the phone."
- And I also want to control how fast somebody forgives me.
- I compare. The person was amazing and you should be, too.
- Keep the house, and my space, my car, anything really, really clean and when somebody gets it dirty, I get really angry because I want it to be organized and not have any papers out. And when someone gets in or messes up my organization or my cleanliness, I get really angry with them. I don't want streaks on the fridge, I don't want streaks on the windows, I vacuum the carpet a certain way so there's lines. Or the grass must go in a particular direction.
- I make commitments and then I break them and then I say, "Oh, I'm sorry, I really feel badly. I was tired. Here's what happened." But I do it again and again and again and again.

There are many, many examples of how I engage in controlling behaviors, whether it's self-denigrating control or whether it's self-adulating control. And again, when you're in one, you're in both of them. Any of those statements, if any of them jumped out at you, please, please write them down. There were at least a hundred, maybe two hundred examples of controlling behavior that I guarantee you, you'll be able to connect to at least one of them.

So, your responsibility is to know yourself, know your motives, know how to be emotionally honest, know how to be responsible, and know how to be humble. Listen to this podcast again and again and mark those statements, those phrases that you relate with, that you think or say, that you know are realizing are controlling. And change. Listen to the podcasts on the RAISE process and Truth declarations: podcast [68](#), [69](#), and [70](#). Reframe those distortions back into Truth. Realize why you're engaging in controlling that illusionary behavior and identify the distortions that are driving your choices to control—and then reframe them into Truth.

Controlling is the evidence that I've dropped my personal responsibility for my own thoughts, my own feelings, and choices. And it is my responsibility to pick that up again.

Control is destructive and threatens yours and another's peace. And ultimately will make it impossible, if not acknowledged and reframed, to connect with self, to connect with others, and to connect with God.

Connection is our goal and desiring to connect is really what this is all about, this desire to connect. So if I have a desire to connect and I'm not conscientious, I'm not aware, I won't be able to create connection. So connection is the goal and desire not to connect by way of control. Be awake, be humble, be willing, be honest, and most of all, be responsible for whether you're controlling or not.

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