

# The Law of No Control

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Why our desire for control can be counter-productive

The Buddhists say it's not a good idea to try and control things. They say that if you "cling" to specific outcomes or try to force people, events or things to conform to exactly what you want, that you'll actually cause yourself to suffer. Trying too hard is a bit like swimming against the current.

Ok - but this presents a bit of a problem. You're in the world, trying to get what you want, trying to surpass yourself and bring about a future you'd like to live in. You're trying to enjoy yourself, all the while following whatever it is you dream about. It's normal in this mindset to feel attached to the "fruition" of your projects.

Got a big fight coming up? Of course you want to win!

Trying to make the last spot on a team? Or place yourself well in a certain opportunity?  
Trying to get an event together? To make move at work? Or to get a special someone to notice you?

Sure you're going to be emotionally involved with what happens in the endeavors you've care about. That's maybe the definition of living the life you want!

The thing is though - and here's where the Buddhists are kinda right - you never know when success is going to hit you, nor failure for that matter.

Very often, there's a kind of numbers game going on. You can still do everything right, and yet not come away with the result you wanted. Job interviews are a lot like this. So is dating. Even though you play your cards to the best of your ability, every shot is just NOT going to be a winner. That's how it goes!

And the more you get worked up about a particular defeat or missed opportunity, the more you clog up your mental head-space and distract attention from what's really important: playing the game to the best of your ability.

The only thing you do control is your own preparation, and your reaction to a particular outcome. You can't control what the world does and doesn't give you.

If you feel like your performance in some way caused a defeat or a failure, work at bettering it. But realize also that even if you perform "perfectly", the world just isn't programmed to give you what you want every time!

Yet, you can be sure that statistically the more you play, the more you win. If you really want something, it's important to keep putting yourself in situations where that thing can happen. But if one opportunity doesn't go as you'd like - fine! So what? There are other opportunities. Your job is now to look for them.

If life is a numbers game, and only one time out of ten is really a winner, you've now only got nine tries left to go!