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Time Magazine

Dear Editor:

How do we gain a sense of control in our life? The "thoughtful," well-written article by John Cloud (Time, February 13, 2006), describes how Beck's Cognitive Therapy--change thoughts--and Hayes' ACT--accept thoughts-- seek to answer this question. As Cloud intimates, the issue may be less an "either/or" than at first appears. Specifically, research on Control Therapy has demonstrated over the past twenty-five years with several thousand individuals that an optimum sense of control comes from finding what **combination** of positive assertive change and positive yielding acceptance is best for a specific person in a given situation.

In addition to bridging "change and acceptance," Control Therapy research also has shown that more refinement of these concepts is needed. An **assertive, change mode of control** can be positive (striving for excellence, self-improvement) or negative (overcontrol, perfectionism). Similarly, a **yielding, accepting mode of control** can be positive (at peace with self, gratefulness for what you have) or negative (passivity, helplessness).

Since clinical (and cross-cultural) research indicates that different people (and cultures) have different "Control Profiles," Control Therapy involves helping individuals learn about their unique control profile: their control story and dynamics, including desire for control, fear of loss of control, and agency of control (do they get a sense of control from self and/or others). Control Therapy then teaches how to reduce the two negative modes of control and to find the best blend and balance between positive assertive change and positive yielding acceptance for reducing distress, and enhancing health and healing.

We share this in the spirit in which Cloud's article was written: as an effort to help bring increased happiness to those who suffer, and greater wisdom to those who seek it.

Thank you.

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