

Unit 2.1 Locus of Control & Accountability

OVERVIEW

By now, you understand how powerful beliefs can be. A strongly held belief, ingrained into your subconscious over many years, can exert a powerful influence on your actual capabilities. Simply put, if you don't believe you can do something, you probably can't—regardless of your native abilities.

But there's another part of the story that goes beyond your beliefs about a particular situation to your beliefs about *yourself*. Even if you believe that you possess the capabilities needed to accomplish something, you also need to believe that you can *use* those capabilities in order to change your environment in the necessary way.

This set of beliefs about your ability to change your environment is called your "locus of control." People who believe that they can influence their environment in positive ways have what's known as an "internal locus of control"—that is, they believe that *they* act on their environment. Those who feel the other way have an "external locus of control"—their environment acts on *them*.

The good news about locus of control is that, even if they have the same native abilities, people with an internal locus of control tend to be more successful in life, business, and personal relationships than those with an external local of control. But there is a downside: if you have control over your environment, then you must accept *accountability* for your successes and failures in life.

UNIT QUESTIONS / EXERCISES

1. You obviously can't control other people. But you can control your personal and business relationships. How? Share your answers with your coach and/or the group.

2. Think of a time when you felt unable to control your environment. Was there anything you could have done differently to increase your level of control? Discuss your answers with your coach and/or the group.

3. Think about how this applies to your work relationship at John L. Scott. What aspects of the organizational environment seem to be outside your control? What can you do to improve your ability to control or influence these situations? Discuss these issues with the group.
