

Words matter. Distinctions make a difference.

control **vs.** influence

/kən'tröl/ noun

/'ɪnflooəns/ noun

THE DISTINCTIONS DEFINITION

CONTROL • Directing action toward a desired result.

INFLUENCE • Creating the conditions in which others choose to act.

Control directs the action.

Influence creates the conditions for ownership.

Both have a place. The leadership question is knowing when direction is required - and when the result depends on another person thinking, engaging, and choosing.

CONTROL

When direction is called for

- Decide when authority is yours.
- Set direction and clarify standards.
- Assign responsibility and accountability.
- Clarify who decides, contributes, and performs.

INFLUENCE

When commitment must be created

- Build trust and credibility.
- Ask before telling.
- Listen for understanding.
- Create clarity and room for choice.

AUTHORITY STILL MATTERS

Authority can require action. It cannot require ownership.

Control tells people what to do.

Influence helps create why they choose to do it.

WHERE IS THE LEVERAGE?

Four places to look.

Self-awareness comes first. Before reacting, identify where your leverage actually is. Different situations call for different responses.

CONTROL + AUTHORITY

What requires a decision or clear direction?

Locate legitimate authority. Clarify who decides, who contributes, who performs, and what accountability follows.

INFLUENCE

Where does movement depend on another person?

Use trust, credibility, inquiry, listening, and relationship to affect what becomes possible next.

ACCEPTANCE

What is already so?

Stop spending energy fighting reality. Acceptance is not agreement or resignation; it is beginning from what is true now.

OWNERSHIP

What is still mine to own?

Regardless of fault, own your contribution, your response, and the next action or conversation available to you.

Influence begins with understanding.

A better argument is not necessarily more influential. Influence begins by becoming curious about the world as the other person sees it - what matters to them, what they are protecting, and what they are listening for.

INFLUENCE CAN CREATE MOVEMENT IN FOUR PLACES

PERCEPTION

What are they seeing - or not seeing?

POINT OF VIEW

From what position are they looking?

CONTEXT

What frame is giving the facts their meaning?

LISTENING

What history, concerns, assumptions, or trust shape what they hear?

THE LEADERSHIP SHIFT

From producing results through others

to empowering others to produce the results.

FROM REACTION TO CHOICE

Notice what happens when reality resists you.

The urge to control often shows up first as a reaction. Frustration is useful information when we can see what is underneath it before the reaction becomes the conversation.

Three common sources of frustration

UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS

What I expected did not happen - or the expectation was never actually an agreement.

THWARTED INTENTIONS

Something interrupted an outcome I was committed to producing.

UNDELIVERED COMMUNICATIONS

Something that needs to be said, clarified, requested, or acknowledged remains unspoken.

Recover choice: four moves.

- 1 RECOGNIZE** Notice the reaction before it becomes the conversation.
- 2 REFLECT** Ask what expectation, intention, or communication is underneath it.
- 3 REFRAME** Look again: what calls for control, influence, acceptance, or ownership?
- 4 RESPOND** Choose the next action or conversation deliberately.

OWNERSHIP RESTORES POWER

Ownership is not blame. It is locating what remains yours to choose, do, or say.

Given what is so, what can I own now?