

# Con Trolling

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A person can only successfully troll you if you let them con you into controlling your sense of validation.

Here's how it works: a troll preys on your need to be affirmed. Nearly everything that a troll does is to signal a message to you that says "I don't like you and I'm not going to grant you the gift of my approval." Once you start using arguments as a means of begging the troll to become your ally, the troll wins. Now he/she can simply play the easy and endless game of using everything you say as a basis for offering responses that make you feel more desperate for their acceptance and more frustrated for not receiving it.

Here's how you break the cycle: Practice the art of selective outcome-detachment. That is, liberate yourself from the disempowering belief that you are at a loss every single time someone dislikes or disagrees with you. In order to do this, you don't even need to suppress your natural need for validation. You don't have to become a pseudo-Zen monk who pretends to be above it all nor do you need to play the role of the calloused macho who someone manages to get along just fine without any human affection or approval at all. All you have to do is recognize that you don't need the entire world's validation in order to get what you need and get on with your life. Instead of chasing after the fanship and friendship of every Tom, Dick, and Harry that has an opinion, you can orient your actions around the people you actually need to serve in order to fulfill your life mission.

Perhaps you can't afford to ignore your spouse. Perhaps you can't afford to ignore your children. Perhaps you can't afford to ignore the students in your class. Perhaps you can't afford to ignore your paying customers. Perhaps you can't afford to ignore some really annoying people that you're committed to serving. Perhaps you can't afford to ignore harsh feedback and tough criticism from people who are trying to make you better. That's all fine and dandy, **but** you are headed for swift and sure destruction if you get duped into believing that you can't ignore **anyone at all**. In a world where scarcity and opportunity cost is real, you cannot be an optimal performer, prolific creator, or simply a healthy person unless you're real clear with yourself about who you're going to ignore and why you're going to ignore them.

Instead of letting trolls control your moods and reflexes, get out of the reactive orientation and get into the creative orientation. That is, let your choices be guided by a robust understanding of your "why." Think about the things you do in terms of questions like "What do I really hope to achieve from this?" and "How does this discussion align with my highest priorities?" Don't be a slave to the lizard brain's urge to fight back or negotiate with

every single person who wants to give you a hard time about your choices and ideas. You have the right to establish boundaries when determining who you need to please and appease. Have some standards and stick to them. Some of your “haters” will matter, but most of them won’t. Most of them **can’t**.

Once you realize this, the control is back in your hands and you’ll never be conned by trolls again.

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