

The Battle for Moderate Control Isn't Worth It

I like to be in control.

I also don't mind being totally out of control.

What's torturous is having a little control but constantly battling with forces outside my control to maintain that sliver. Like sitting in traffic. I control the vehicle, but am at the mercy of other forces for most of the progress that can be made. I'd rather be on an open freeway with total control or in an airplane with none. In the former, I get to call the shots. The latter I get to totally free my mind and laugh at whatever fate brings.

Closer to home, I like total control over my workspace. I want minimal, neat, orderly, clean desk and space around me. Total control of my environs. But outside my workspace – in my garage, kitchen, living room, etc. – I have fully surrendered control to my kids. I used to try to maintain some semblance of order, but the battle for semi-control was endless, fruitless, and exhausting. I would get mad, but the living areas would never be fully ordered as I wished anyway. I was putting in 80% energy for 20% return. When I finally surrendered all expectation of minimalism and order in spaces outside my office where I have total control, my life got a lot better. I can relax and let it go.

There are a lot of things in life that fit in the category of very hard battles for very small slices of partial control. They're not usually worth it. I try to let go and ride the tide, or find those areas where I can have complete control. Fighting for middle ground wears me out.