

Leading with Gandhi or Hitler

Who is making your choices?

By JP Sears, Holistic Health Coach

Why do certain parts of our lives seem to be out of our control? For some of us perhaps a better question is, “Why does my *entire* life seem to be out of my control?” Or for those of us who think we are in control, we might ponder the question, “Why do I control my life in the manner that I do?” In short, most of us feel, at times, a lack of control about life or we wonder why we control it the way that we do. The sense of control we have or don’t have about our life has a direct impact on our peace of mind.

It is significantly stressful and turbulent to feel as though you are being controlled by your life. I’d like to invite you to consider how you can reverse this equation to have control of your life by visiting a metaphorical concept. Who is making your choices? Is it your inner Gandhi, leading with peace and conscious consideration, or your inner Hitler, leading with fear, destruction, and reactivity? You and I have both within us. Who we choose to lead with in life has a dramatic influence as to whether we are the navigators in control of our life or not. We can also consider how the personal, professional, and spiritual aspects of our lives are compromised when Hitler is the leader within and how these aspects harmonize when we lead with the inner Gandhi.

Inner Hitler

Hitler led his followers with the force of destruction, leaving broken pieces, death, and gloom in his wake. Maybe we could even say that Hitler led out of fear rather than love. The inner Hitler within you and me is of this mentality. When he is our inner commander in chief there is very little conscious consideration for our highest good and instead decisions are made from a very reactive place that fosters physical, emotional, mental and spiritual destruction and frustration. We’ll kick ourselves later with the boot of frustration, anger, grief and guilt for his decisions, perhaps realizing we’ve planted the seeds for more problems with the actions taken from his command.

The inner Hitler is essentially our inauthentic self, or who we are not. But if this is the case, then why do we let him have such control? After all, we feel such frustration with ourselves (we might deflect by blaming life) when we become smothered by this aggressive force. The reality is that we have actually *learned* to compromise who we are in order to gain a sense of self-esteem and safety. It is said that 90% of our beliefs are based on the value systems of our parents. Therefore it likely isn’t much of a surprise that we unconsciously create our inner Hitler at a very young age in order to foster a sense of esteem, belonging and stability with our parents and role models. In other words, because we learn by example, how we see our parents’ choices and values in life

becomes Xeroxed into us and sealed deep into our unconscious minds. This is the birthing process of the inner Hitler.

You might say, “My parents were good people, how could it be destructive to model them?” What is destructive is actually not the modeling process, but the fact that we have to abandon who we authentically are in order to model them or anyone else. Seeing life and making choices similar to how our parents did is not without purpose, as it keeps us feeling safe and accepted by our family when we’re young. For example, there aren’t many five year olds who have the inner stability to say to mom before going into church, “Mom, your religious beliefs are not true for me. I’m going to sit in the car while you go into church.” Doing so would very likely create a deep sense of rejection and insecurity within the child. Or, as another example, if a little boy’s father had a subtle level of disrespect toward women, the son is likely to become imprinted with how he sees his dad treat women. The inner Hitler typically does not “choose” in life, but rather reacts from a fearful place of avoiding what will cause a sense of rejection. Therefore the boy with the disrespectful father grown into an adult doesn’t consciously consider his choices about how to treat women. Instead, while being unconsciously loyal to his father’s values, he feels like he is on auto-pilot with his words and actions towards women and he wonders why he can’t have a successful intimate relationship.

As adults we are mature enough to meet our own needs, however because our inner Hitler is so deeply ingrained we are often still making choices from his perspective throughout adulthood at the expense of burying our authentic self while creating various levels of resentment and inner conflict in the process. The stressful emotions created from leading with our inner Hitler not only have profound negative impacts on our inner peace and happiness, but physiologically speaking they wreak havoc on our bodies by elevating circulating levels of stress hormones. This can manifest as increased weight gain, memory loss, weakening of the immune system, or weakening of bones. We can continue to abandon our authentic self in favor of being in an emotional incubator, but that incubator eventually becomes our prison. Or, we can commit to a conscious effort to shift command from Hitler to Gandhi.

Inner Gandhi

During his life, Gandhi led from a graceful place of love and peace, never using violence or destruction, while having a powerful impact on the betterment of humanity. The inner Gandhi operates from this same place along with having conscious consideration of what our authentic values are. He’ll acknowledge what it is we would choose in order to feel emotionally safe within our parent’s value system, and then he’ll consider if that is true for our authentic self or not. He is the spokesperson for our authentic self. The control we seek in life can be discovered by realizing what is true for others might not be true for us, and then having the courage to live and speak our truth anyway. The inner Gandhi’s leadership frees us from the suffocating grip of a destructive inner leader.

By leading with Gandhi we facilitate the creation of peace within, rather than war and conflict inside of our minds and bodies. The peace flows from our consciousness into our bodies, strengthening our immune system and vitality levels. We become capable of making mindful choices that serve our spirit rather than reacting in ways that serve who we are not.

We can discover and utilize one of our greatest sources of power, choice. Gandhi allows us to make choices according to our authentic self's truth. While leading with Hitler we live the illusion of having choice but in reality we lose the power of choice due to our reactive nature. Without the power of choice we lose control of our lives.

How to Mature Hitler into Gandhi

In our quest to evolve our Hitler nature into Gandhi like consciousness, we can acknowledge that we'll always have both within. The real issue is to consciously decide who we lead with most of the time. You can imagine that Gandhi would not be out to kill the Hitler's of his day, but to instead harmoniously co-exist with them letting his serene yet powerful love bring balance to the unruly rulers. Respectfully acknowledging that our inner Hitler, while leading us away from our authentic self today, served a very important purpose of providing a means through which we felt safe and stable as a child in the past is the first part of shifting to the inner Gandhi.

Once gratitude is expressed to the Hitler within, evolving to leading ourselves from a Gandhi place happens through increased awareness of self. From this point we can discover more about our Gandhi nature by exploring the following exercise which helps to expose our Hitler tendencies that would otherwise be a self consuming trap, and helps unearth our Gandhi truths.

Self Discovery Drill

For each of the following questions you're invited to find three answers:

- Answer #1 is what you guess your father's answer would be.
- Answer #2 is what you guess your mother's answer would be.
- Answer #3 is what you guess your authentic self's answer is.

Your #1 and #2 answers represent potential Hitler responses. Consciously recognizing the tendencies of Hitler is vital to give your authentic self a point of reference. As Ram Dass says, "You can't get out of jail until you realize you're in one." It is important to reiterate that this is not to say mom and dad were wrong in their values. It is to say that you are a separate person from who they are, with some truths that are authentically similar to theirs and some truths that are authentically different from theirs. Our purpose is not to say the inner Hitler is bad. Instead, we can acknowledge that the inner Hitler is different from our authentic self and may not serve us anymore.

1. What is a worthwhile occupation?
2. What is the meaning of having a college education?
3. What does money mean to you?
4. What does it mean to be successful?
5. What qualities are important in a partner?
6. What are my responsibilities toward my partner?
7. Women should be treated how?
8. Men should be treated how?
9. What does it mean to cry?
10. What does it mean to voice painful feelings?
11. What is an effective way to meet your emotional needs?
12. What are appropriate ways to express sexual energy?
13. What is the purpose of life?
14. What does the concept of God mean to you?
15. What does it mean to make decisions that your parents disagree with?

Conclusion

Without experiencing the darkness of learning who we aren't by being led from the inner Hitler we wouldn't be able to experience the brilliance of being led to who we really are by the hand of the inner Gandhi. Instead of living life from a place of being reactive with decisions and actions, you can decide to be aware of why you choose what you choose. With the awareness of how the soil works in which our choices blossom, and from there consciously deciding which choices are for us, we are empowered to be more authentic with our decisions which exponentially expands the control we have of our lives.