



INTRODUCTION

MAY WE HAVE THIS DANCE?

“These days, the only absolute that really seems to matter is keeping an open heart.”

~Nina Utne

Welcome to Freakology 101. This book is based on the belief that the urge to be overly controlling is a natural human response to an internal experience of feeling out of control. History provides us with plenty of examples for our examination of the issue. Let’s take a look, shall we?

Queen Elizabeth I kept Mary, Queen of Scots, captive to protect her own throne (and then had her executed). Control freak? You be the judge. The “Great Schism” in the Christian Church was like a game of tag. In 1054, Cardinal Humbert of Rome and Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople, each saw himself as the true leader of the Church at the time. Humbert excommunicated Cerularius who promptly returned the favour (“I excommunicate you.” – “Not if I excommunicate you first!”) Who’s in control? And, of course, Napoleon Bonaparte, who had an almost adolescent need to be the best in all arenas, can be described as the quintessential control freak. Even if your knowledge of history conjures up no controller other than Fred Flintstone, rest assured, control freaks have been around for a long, long time.

When considering the modern-day control freak, perhaps political figures (you know who they are) or pop culture icons come to mind. There’s the character of Monica Geller, the perfectionist from the TV. sitcom *Friends* who knows when any

object has been moved even the slightest bit in her apartment. All the primary *Seinfeld* characters display control freak tendencies at some time or another (just think marble rye). They're on your TV, they show up at your dinner parties, they think they're running the world. They're control freaks and they're everywhere.

Who were you sitting in front of at your child's hockey game last week? Was it one of those unrestrained parents who seemed tormented by the fact that nine-year-old Sammy wasn't playing like a pro? Have you noticed the banquet guest who switches place cards to ensure that he is sitting with someone he knows? Or maybe – just maybe the control freak is you. If so, you've come to the right place. While you might be convinced that you have the right to do whatever you want with your life (and we, the authors, think this is a good thing if it's done in a healthy way), the bottom line is you may simply be overzealous in your efforts.

Look closely; you'll see that in fact we all live together in a kind of control freak culture. As "modern" people in the "modern" world with ultramodern gadgets and gizmos, many people feel more compelled than ever to get *control over life* – to force unwieldy life to become more manageable. How often do you hear terms like "multitask," "stress management" or categorise possible endeavours as "doable" or "not doable"? How often do you observe people checking their watches, leaving things unfinished or never ever getting them quite right? How many people do you know who clean to reduce stress, hold themselves back from great heights of personal potential and creativity (yes, this is a control freak behaviour, too), hold rigid, life-limiting beliefs, take over situations or try to get the upper hand or the last word?

By working long hours, attempting to fix the unfixable or simply unnecessary, rushing to be on time for multiple activities, contributing to a quick-fix, disposable, media-saturated, consumer-based culture, we have gotten ourselves exactly where we want to be – out of control. Most of us recognize that we do all these things to no avail, so why don't we stop? Here's a thought: as human beings, particularly control freaks, we actually set ourselves up, according to our daily routines and lists of priorities, with unachievable goals precisely so we can perpetuate our personal cycles of trying to get things the way we want them. In other words, it is only when we feel chronically out of control that we can give ourselves the *simulated* pleasure of getting things back *under* control.

But are control freaks achieving the desired effect? We give this question a resounding "not even close." In fact, control freaks are actually producing an effect opposite to the one

they're after. By choosing to live this way, control freaks and all of us who contribute to such a culture are actually ensuring perpetual intensity, heaviness and fear – both personally and globally. While the intention might be good and while you might know on an instinctive level that balanced control is necessary for survival and happiness, if you're freaky about it, you're probably not going for the real thing. Instead, 'round and 'round you go, caught on the hamster wheel, as it were, trying diligently to catch up, to multi-manage, to force it, and to rein it all back in.

This book draws the important distinction between the pseudo-control of the control freak and the genuine, healthy kind. It presents more than tips on how to deal with the control freak (you, or someone else) in your life. This book is about transformational healing and stepping into authentic personal power. It's a guide and reference and an adventure designed to liberate you from whatever your perceived limitations are, whether certified control freaky or just slightly lacking in inventiveness when it comes to living lightly. If you're a fellow control freak, thank you. Not only have you developed efficiency and expertise in many areas of life, you are a gift to the world in that you point us all in the direction we must look if we are to learn to live from pure joy.

When you practise the principles offered here, things you never dreamed were possible, become possible. Many gifts will emerge within your own life as a result of working this guide – most notably, the ability to experience all of life with a light heart. These gifts are both personal and yours to share. When unhealthy control is addressed head-on, its source exposed, and it is healed once and for all, great things happen. Most of these principles lie beyond the scope of the limited, control freak perspective. The impact is greatest for the ones who are really ready to make a change.

So, in some regards, this is a highly personal journey, serving as a foundation for cultivating new ways of being with yourself, your loved ones, your choices and your very orientation to life. We have also created the guide to be uncharacteristically communal in another sense. We intend that it become a platform for sharing, for levity and laughter (especially at yourself), and for a heightened individual and collective awareness that we all need to cultivate a depth of understanding of ourselves and others... because we're all in this freakin' world together!