

Uncontrolled

*To be uncontrolled is to be loose and unrestricted, often in a derogatory sense—the dog is running around uncontrolled, Mary's children are uncontrolled, appetites can be uncontrolled. We know it is unhealthy to be a control freak, to exaggerate the desire to control, but being without control is worse. It is worse than being wild, which suggests no boundaries at all to break through. A wild horse is not uncontrolled but wild. Even **controlled** anger, which one might think a symptom of virtue, suggests an anger which is bottled up and dangerous.*

Examples

1 A dog's death

Sometimes, if rarely, I lose control of my emotions. The last time this happened was when my dog Biscuits died. Of course we saw it coming, but we kept hoping. Then one morning she didn't move. My wife and two children and I all went in different directions with our grief. Faces got swollen, eyes got red, no one could concentrate. Our emotions were as if freed from the default condition of human being and given power over us. Where were those emotions before they took control of us? Were they the potential of a wiring which typically bears so and so many ohms of electricity and now finds that number doubled? How were we to climb down from this uncontrolled situation? Why was solidarity, hugging one another, eventually the most consolatory move toward control? Was it a dog's death or the lossful condition of humanity we were overcome by?

2 Uncontrolled speech

True though it is that we prize freedom of speech, it seems equally important to value control over speech. Wisdom literatures, worldwide, attest to the dangers of loose lips. My wife, Nigerian, brings from her culture a firm insistence on controlled speech. Often she finds my relaying of personal informations, to different friends of mine, objectionable. I tell Walt that we had Jim to dinner over the week end, and that we talked about this and that. Jim is a mutual friend of Walt and me, and this friendly, positive-minded relay of news seems to me in place. Not to my wife, who berates me for having told Walt that we had had Jim to dinner on the week-end. This, she says, is none of Walt's business. Jim can tell him directly about the event, if he wants to. We should in any case leave it to Jim to talk about the occasion, if anyone does.