The BITE Model Power & Control Wheel

Behavior Control

Pressure to follow strict rules about routines, clothing, diet, sexuality, or purity

Feeling watched, evaluated, or judged for not doing things "the right way"

Being told who you can spend time with, date, marry, or trust

Needing permission to make personal decisions

Punishment, shaming, or loss of community if you don't comply

Information Control

Being told outside sources are dangerous, deceptive, or spiritually harmful

Feeling anxious or guilty for reading, researching, or asking questions

Discouragement from learning about other viewpoints

Being given curated or "approved" teachings only

Gossip, reporting, or "accountability" systems that monitor you

Loss of Autonomy & Identity

Thought Control

Black-and-white thinking ("us vs. them," "right vs. wrong")

Feeling guilty for doubting or disagreeing

Using mantras, prayer, or thought-stopping when you feel uncertain

Being told your doubts mean something is wrong with you

Insider language that replaces your own words or instincts

Emotional Control

Fear-based teachings (hell, punishment, abandonment, shame)

Conditional love or acceptance

Feeling guilty for having boundaries or needs

Punishment for "negative" emotions like anger or sadness

Being told leaving will ruin your life, relationships, or spiritual safety

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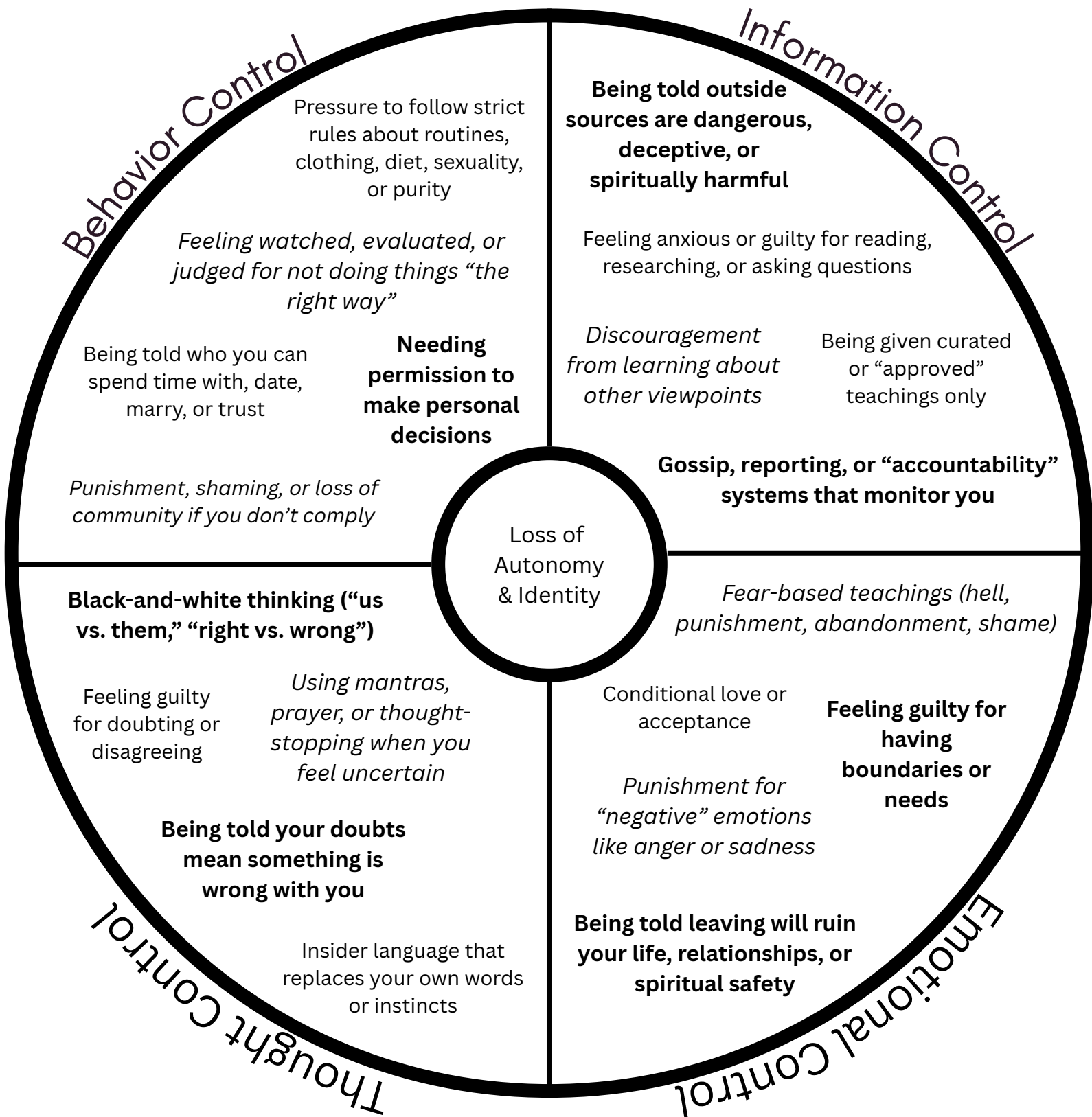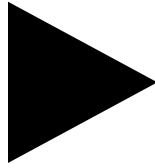
Learned <u>survival</u> patterns:

When someone's behavior is tightly controlled, the body learns to prioritize safety over individuality. Many people describe "shrinking themselves," masking, or disconnecting from their needs to avoid consequences.
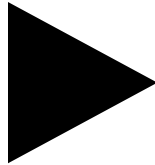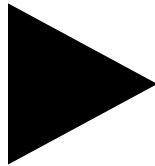
Limiting information keeps the nervous system in a narrower sense of reality. It's not a lack of intelligence, it's the result of only ever being given one safe option.

Thought control often creates internal conflict and self-doubt. Over time, people learn to override their inner voice to stay safe or accepted.

Emotional control trains the body to survive by avoiding disapproval. This can lead to anxiety, fawning, perfectionism, or chronic self-blame, especially after leaving.

<u>Healing</u> looks like:

You choose routines that work for you now.
Healing looks like building routines, boundaries, and habits based on your values; not fear, pressure, or expectations. You reconnect with your needs and trust your body's rhythm again.

Slowly expanding your access to information without fear.
Healing looks like accessing information, ideas, and perspectives without shame or panic. You trust yourself to sort through what feels true, helpful, or safe for you; at your own pace.
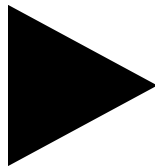
Learning to hear and believe yourself.
Healing looks like hearing your inner voice again. You notice old messages and gently replace them with your own beliefs, values, and intuition. You develop confidence in your thinking without needing permission.

Giving yourself permission to feel, need, and be fully human.
Healing looks like allowing your emotions (including anger, sadness, desire, and joy) without shame. You let yourself need things, set boundaries, and express your full humanity. Safety comes from within, not from appeasing others.

Your nervous system learned to survive in a high-control environment. These patterns didn't come from weakness; they came from conditioning.

These responses were conditioned, *not chosen*, and your body adapted for survival.