

# CIRCLES OF CONCERN, INFLUENCE AND CONTROL

‘Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference’.

Being able to recognise the difference between the things you can change and those you can't will help you build your resilience. At times we all focus on things that impact on us but over which we have no influence and control. This reduces our resilience because we expend energy on things we cannot change, instead of investing it in the things over which we do have control.

The Circles of Influence concept, developed by Stephen Covey, can help you recognise which things you can influence and control, and which you can't, even though they may impact on you.

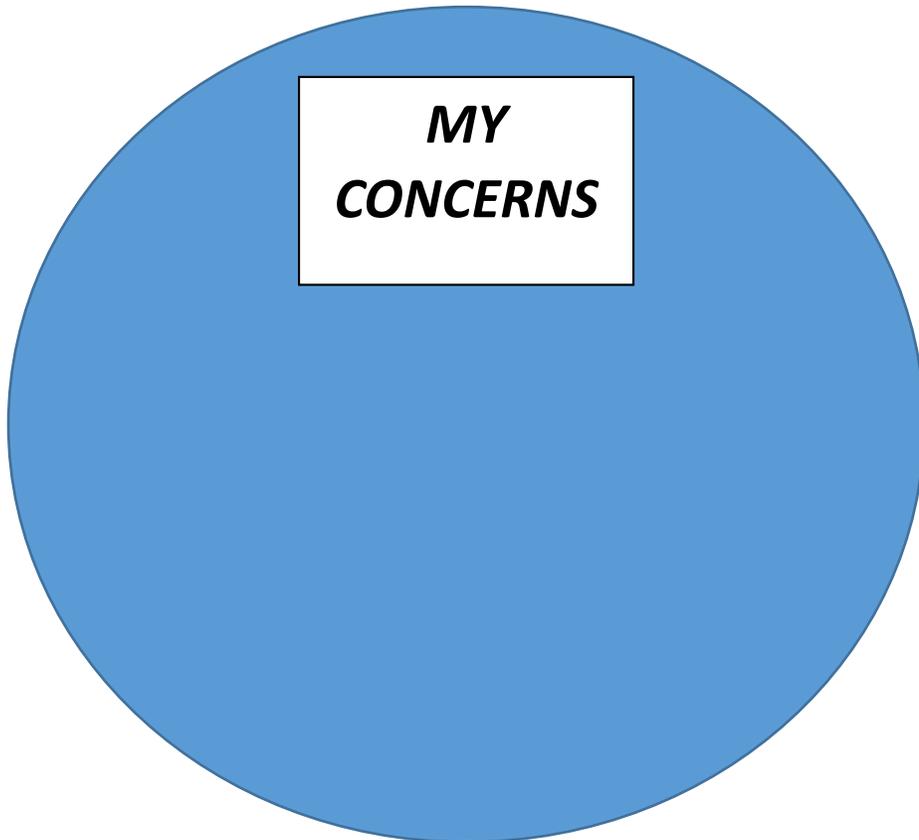
Proactive people.....'work on things they can do something about. The nature of their energy is positive, enlarging and magnifying'

'Reactive people.....focus on the weaknesses of other people, the problems in the environment, the circumstances over which they have not control. Their focus results in blaming and accusing attitudes, ...and increased feelings of victimisation. '

*Stephen Covey, The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People, Simon and Schuster, 2004. Pg 83*

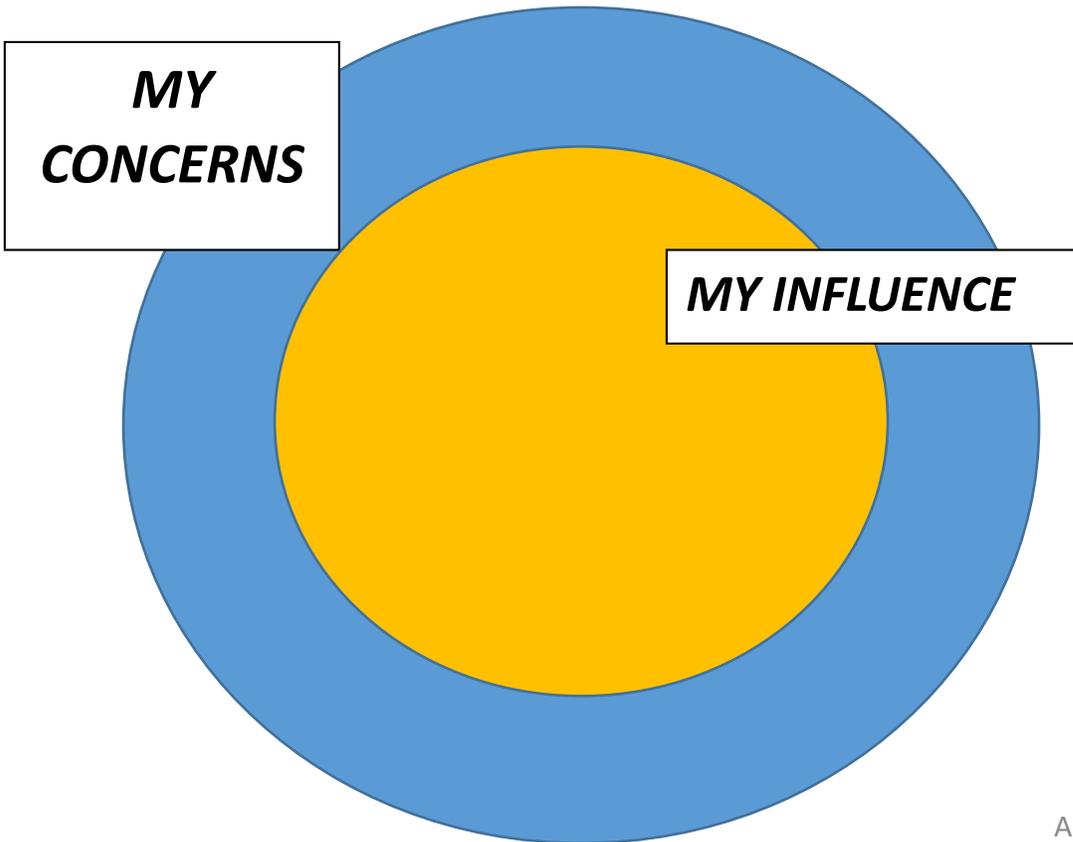
Try this exercise:

Start by listing all the things that are currently concerning you. Then draw a large circle on a piece of paper and populate it with these things. This is your circle of concern.



***Which of these things can you influence?***

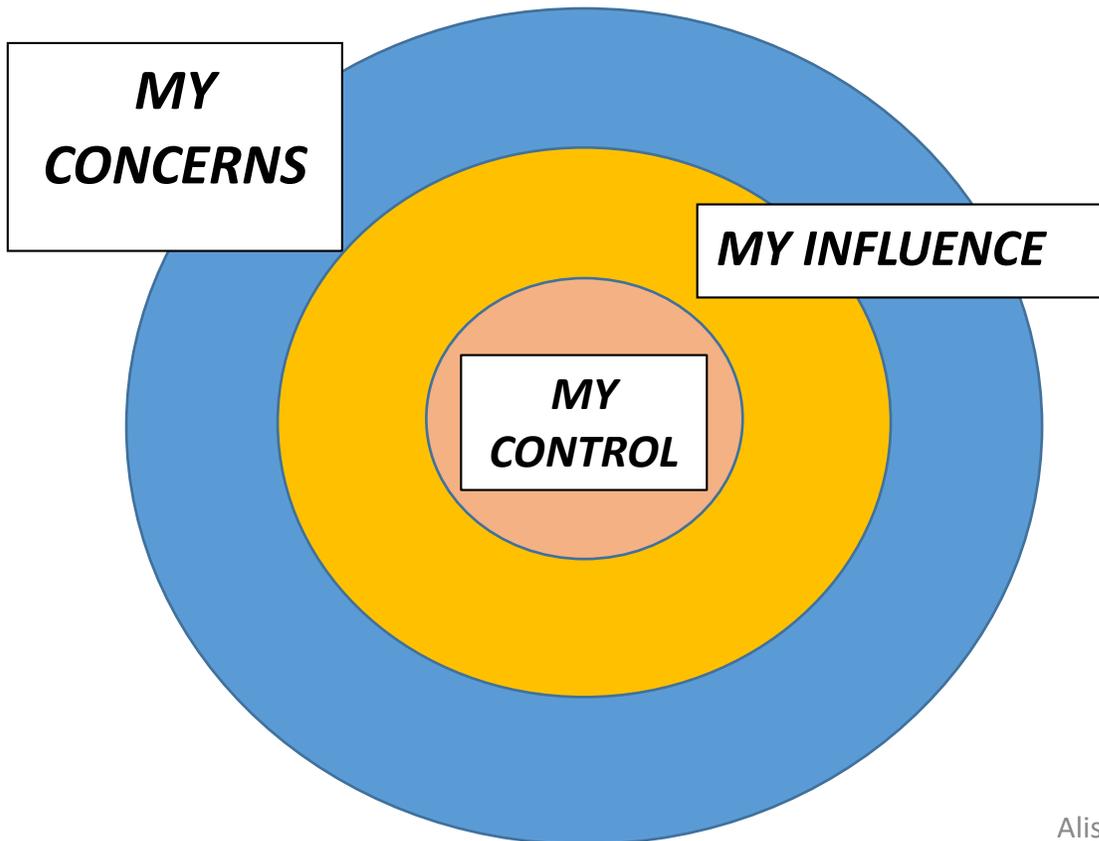
Draw another circle inside the first; this is your circle of influence.  
Move into this circle those things you are concerned about that you have influence over.



***What do you notice?  
Probably that there are fewer  
things in your circle of  
influence than in your circle of  
concern.***

If you wish you can draw a further circle inside your circle of influence – this is your circle of control.

Which of the things you have listed are directly under your control? Put these into the centre circle.



Now have a look at the things that are left in your circle of concern.

What could you do to move them into your circle of influence?

What could you do about them that is within your control?

Which ones can you do nothing about? Practice accepting that you can't do anything about them, and shift your focus and energy to the things you can influence and control.

The more you focus on and operate within your circles of influence and control, the bigger these circles will become.

