

## CIRCLE of CONCERN and CIRCLE of INFLUENCE

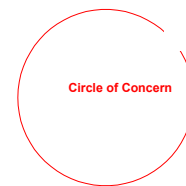
Adapted from The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen R. Covey, Simon & Schuster 1992.

### Application

This technique is good for separating out lower from higher priorities, and gaining ownership for action.

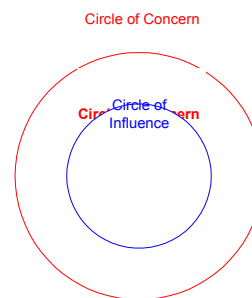
A **Circle of Concern** encompasses the wide range of concerns we have, such as our health, our children, problems at work, the amount of government borrowing, or the threat of war.

No concern



A **Circle of Influence** encompasses those concerns that we can do something about. They are concerns that we have some control over.

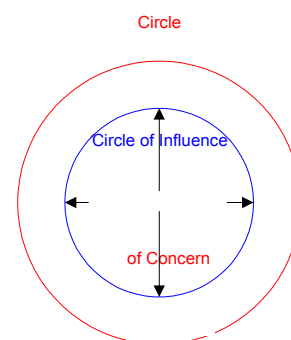
No concern



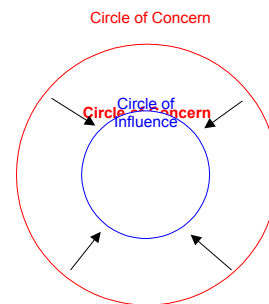
Stephen Covey defines **proactive** as "being responsible for our own lives.....our behaviour is a function of our decisions, not our conditions.

No concern

Proactive people focus on issues within their circle of influence. They work on things they can do something about. The nature of their energy in doing this is positive, enlarging and magnifying. They increase their Circle of Influence



**Reactive** people tend to neglect those issues that are under their control and influence. Their focus is elsewhere and their Circle of Influence shrinks.



**How does this work?**

You can use Stephen Covey’s concepts in the following way:

1. The presenter draws a circle on a flip chart. The presenter writes, inside the circle, all the issues of concern that the group are feeling. The group contributes by probing and questioning, so that any other underlying concerns or facts related to the issue are raised.
2. The presenter draws a Circle of Influence within a Circle of Concern on a second flipchart. The presenter and the group can then transfer the issues raised into either the Circle of Concern or into the Circle of Influence.
3. The group can now explore the steps needed to behave proactively. They might use role play to explore proactive language and behaviour in terms of the issue presented. They can draw up an action plan.

**Determining concerns**

A useful way of determining which Circle people’s concerns are in is by listening to the language used. You can distinguish between the use of the words “**have**” and “**be**”. Circles of Concern are full of “have’s” while Circles of Influence are full of “be’s”. The table below provides some examples.

<b>Have’s (Reactive)</b>	<b>Be’s (Proactive)</b>
I’ll be happy when I have a full establishment...	I can be a better role model...
If only I had a boss who wasn’t...	I can be more organised / resourceful...
If I had respect from...	I can be more loving / understanding...
If I could just have management days...	I will be more diligent...
If the environment was more conducive...	I can seek out personnel and be able to understand...