



## Circles of Control, Influence and Concern

### What is this about?

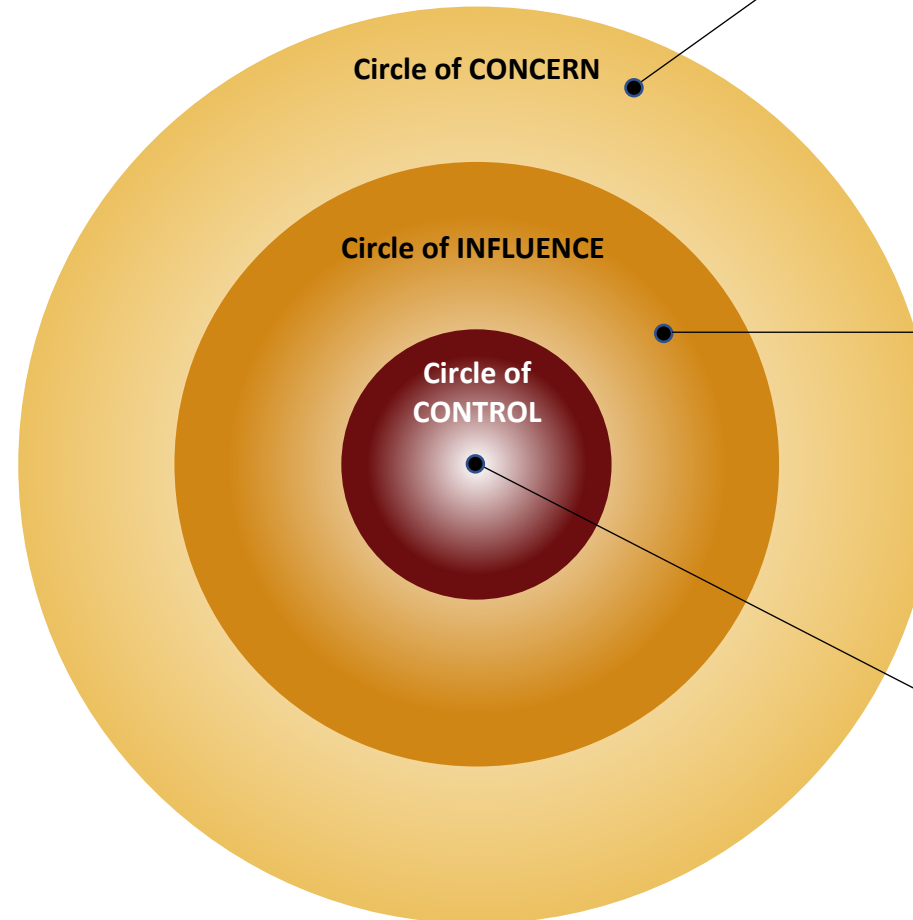
Our lives have always been, and will always remain, uncertain and ever-changing. Disruption, volatility and unpredictable developments in our personal lives or the wider world around us are largely outside our control. COVID-19 has been such an example, but so are more common events, e.g., being made redundant at work, a personal health crisis, dealing with the break-up of an important relationship or losing a loved one. When these things happen, they reveal that our sense of control over external realities has only ever been illusory.

The 3-circle-model is a useful way to look at the world, its impact on us, and how we interact with it. Its main message is that while we may not be able to control what is happening around us, we can choose our response to events and other people's behaviours. This is a key insight which underpins our resilience and wellbeing, adaptability to change, and ability to manage anger and frustration.

This model is based on Stephen Covey's model as described in his influential book, "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People".

Questions to ask yourself include:

- In which circle are you currently spending the majority of your time and energy?
- Does this allow you to be as personally effective as you could be in your life?
- What strategies or tools could you use to change this?



### CONCERN

The big outer circle contains all the **things in life that concern you** – the events that matter to you and have an impact on your life. This may include a restructure at work, your aging parents' deteriorating health, the political climate, a downturn in the economy, a natural disaster... Remember that you have no control over any of these things. Not accepting this is likely to cause you suffering.

### INFLUENCE

The middle circle captures all the things in your life over which you have various **degrees of influence** – but still no control. Examples may include your career prospects, your health, and your relationships. There are things you can do to make a positive impact, role model helpful behaviours and demonstrate effort and care. However, none of these behaviours provide you with guaranteed outcomes.

### CONTROL

The small yet incredibly powerful inner circle holds the **things you truly have control of**: your responses to people and situations, your words and actions, the habits you allow to form in your daily life, where you direct your focus and attention, your priorities, how you speak to yourself, and the mindset you cultivate. This will ultimately determine how you experience reality and shape the quality of your life.