



Circle of concern, influence & control

The difference between Influence and Control. To control means we have absolute authority, the final decision. We can control what we do but not what others do.

For example, I can control if I eat a slice of cake but I can't control if my friend eats a slice of cake. I could highlight to my friend the reasons not to eat it or, by showing restraint, I could inspire them to not eat it through my behaviour. This is influencing them and their decisions, it's not controlling them and telling them what they must do.

There is no ambiguity in control. Through influence we can impact but not guarantee the outcome. Through control we can guarantee the outcome. The circle of influence and control helps us to see consider three areas:

- 1. Things that we have no control over, these are in the outer circle, the circle of concern.**
- 2. Things we can impact on but not guarantee anything will happen as result, these are in the middle circle, the circle of influence**
- 3. Things we can control, these are in the centre circle, the circle of control**

When we look at the circle it is clear that the things we can control are all very much self, our attitude, actions, behaviour, effort etc., when we start to recognise and put effort into these areas we can feel calmer, more focused and ultimately more in control.

The circle of Influence and control can help us combat worry. If the thing you're worrying about falls into the circle of concern then you have no power to change it so, ask yourself, 'What can I change?', you'll find the answer to this question in the circle of control. By being proactive and putting your energy into the areas you have control brings a sense of calm and focus which, in turn, reduces your worries.

By deciding to put your energy into the areas in the circle of control you'll also be 'working' in the circle of influence. Your beliefs and thoughts shape your behaviour which can impact on others. For example, if you decide to be proactively positive and smile at each person you see throughout the day, you'll start to notice that they will in turn smile back or pass that smile on to another, that is your power to influence.

So ask yourself: What am I going to let bother me? What actions can I take to help myself and others? What are the things I can do? How do I want to influence others today? When we start to control ourselves over others we are able to remain focused, stay calm and gain a clearer understanding of our own personal values and beliefs.

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