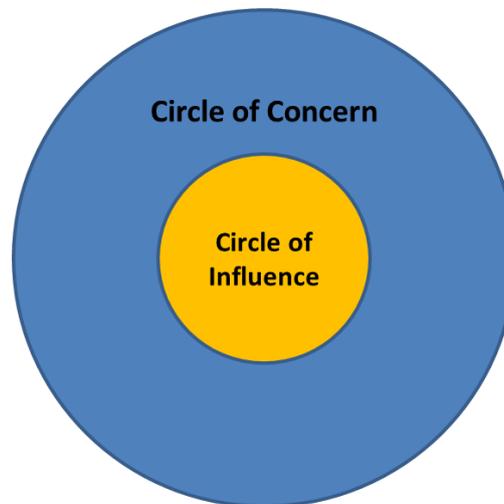




Your Circle of Concern and Circle of Influence

By Andrew Cooke, [Blue Sky GPS \(Growth & Profit Solutions\)](#)

You have limited time, resources and energy to expend on getting work done, projects completed and achieving the results you are looking for. As such you need to be able to use these limited and finite resources effectively. To do this you need to be able to distinguish between what lies within your Circle of Concern and your Circle of Influence as shown in the picture below:



- *The Circle of Concern* – this larger circle encompasses everything that you are concerned about, including those things over which you exert no control or influence e.g. the level of tax, terrorist threats, the current interest rate on loans and mortgages etcetera. We tend to waste a lot of our time, effort and mental energy in the Circle of Concern. This produces nothing as we are unable to overcome the inertia or have any effect.
- *The Circle of Influence* is smaller, and it encompasses those things that we can do something about. These are those things where we can be proactive and, by taking action for ourselves, address them. Here we invest our time, energy and effort on the things that we can change. This produces results and momentum forward.



The two circles – Concern and Influence – are about the choices you make and the results you want.

The Circle of Concern is where you find people who focus on that which they cannot influence. They are reactive, stressed and ineffectual. The Circle of Influence is where we find people who choose to focus on things that they can influence.

By focusing attention and energy on our circle of influence, people are increasingly proactive. The energy we expend is enlarging; each small victory motivates us further exert influence. We don't waste energy on things we can do nothing about, but direct it towards what we can change. With each step we feel stronger and more creative. And so our circle of influence expands.

By focusing on what we can influence we also start to understand better what we cannot influence. We develop a better understanding of our circle of concern, and what it includes and does not include – it may even expand our circle of concern. This provides us with a fuller and better appreciation of the context in which we work, and helps us to better focus on our efforts on what we can influence. It can be incredibly liberating to realize that, in choosing how to respond to circumstances, we affect those circumstances. If we want to cope with the challenges we face, then we need to learn how we can influence them.

Share this diagram with your team, colleagues, and clients to help them distinguish between the two, what lies within their Circle of Influence whilst being aware of what lies within their Circle of Concern – and to focus their efforts on what they can influence, not that over which they have no control. This will provide greater traction, reduced stress and a more effective and productive team who can achieve results more easily.