

The Circle of Concern and The Circle of Influence

Introduction

Human life is unpredictable and change is a huge part of it. However, it's the preparation for change that makes a person successful and well-adjusted in the society. In his book; 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen Covey theorizes a proactive approach towards change and helps one to achieve the best out of a difficult situation. This is what he called 'The Circle of Concern and The Circle of Influence'

Definition

The theory of 'The Circle of Concern and The Circle of Influence' revolves around accepting change and letting go of situations that are beyond one's control. 'The Circle of Concern' includes everything that might be important to a person, it includes anything from family, work, the economy or even the global political order. However, the 'Circle of Concern' is associated with a reduction in control which leads to a reactive reaction from a person. On the contrary, 'The Circle of Influence' is proactive in nature and includes a person's impact on a situation, wherein a person can analyze a change, take control of the situation and do something productive about it.

When to Use it

The theory can be used in an array of situation, mainly:

- When a change is imminent.
- When a change demands a reaction.
- When a person is stressed about the change.
- When a person needs to control a situation.
- When an action needs to be taken.



Details

Consider a change taking place and now ask yourself how you will react in a situation like this? Will you be proactive or reactive? If your 'Circle of Concern' includes wasting energy on things you can not control then you are reactive. Your pattern of behavior would revolve around worrying about the change and using reactive energies like yelling, shouting or even obsessing over it. Hence, 'The Circle of Influence' suggests that you adopt a positive outlook towards a change and influence the situation proactively. Through this tool, your concerns will be reduced to those that can be helped with an action. 'The Circle of Influence' comes with the added benefit of control where your choice of not resisting the change can help to;

- Give you power over yourself and the change.
- Eliminate the feelings of helplessness and stress.
- Save your energy for a successful life.

Example:

Take into account your concern about the health of a family member, you can be reactive by panicking and crying over the emergency while worrying your sick family member as well. However, using the tool of 'Circle of Influence', first you would realize that the matters of health are beyond your control and you have to place your trust in doctors and medicines. Then, you would analyze the situation and categorize the actions needed to help the sick person as you transport them to the hospital and arrange for after-care. The aforementioned is a prime example of a proactive manner of dealing with a situation and actualizing the 'Circle of Influence' as you accept the change and save your energies for a better mental health.

References:

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