

My life in my hands



Aarsha Vidya Foundation

Vedic wisdom for a fulfilling life

About Vedic wisdom for a fulfilling life

- It is a programme of 8 sessions based on Vedic wisdom for anyone who wants more from life.
- Even if one is not interested in Vedic wisdom, the principles if understood and applied will offer windows of insight and mirrors of reflection paving the way for a fulfilling life.

Why would I seek to apply these principles?

- Firstly it will help me to enhance the fulfillment I wish to derive through family, work or any other pursuits.
- Secondly, as I am engaged in my many pursuits, being a student of Vedanta, my self growth is a necessary and non-negotiable step to Self discovery

Session 2: My life in my hands

Self esteem is a disposition by which I experience myself as competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and to see myself as worthy of happiness, while refusing to be my enemy. (Adapted from

Six pillars of Self esteem - Nathaniel Branden)

Self esteem= Self efficacy + Self respect

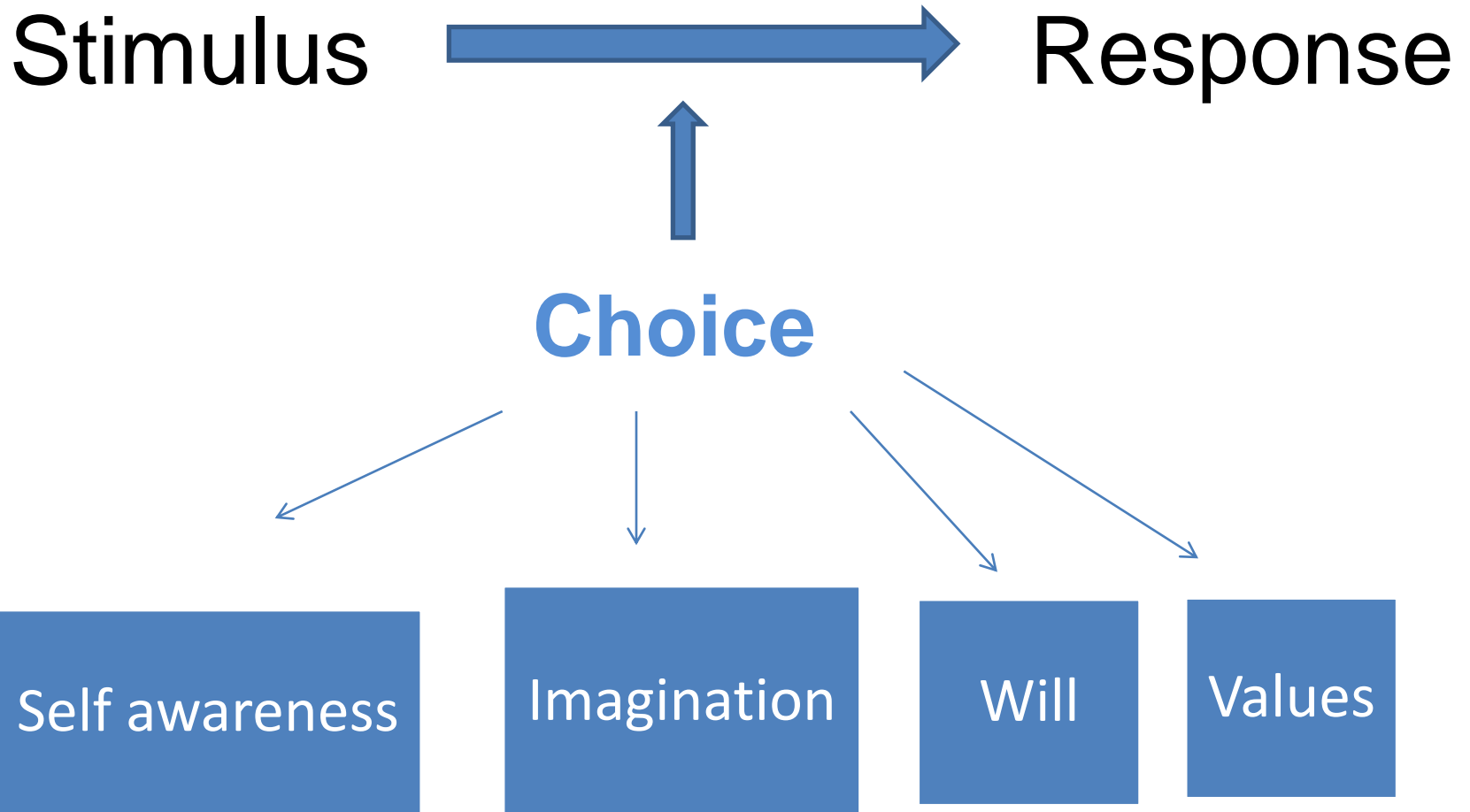
Yogah karmasu kausalam (Bhagavad Gita 2.48)

Effectiveness or competence in action (based on dharma) is Yoga.

Role of choice in a response

- Simply put, life is a series of situations where one needs to respond.
- Much of life is learning to live with oneself and learning to live with others.
- ***Kausalam*** in karma includes the **ability to respond effectively.**
- Your destiny does not depend on situations but your response
- We may think: Situation/ Stimulus → Response
BUT
There are many factors that determine a response.

Each Life situation



One's CHOICE (response) frees oneself from the limitations of any situation.

All actions have consequences
(some foreseen, some unforeseen)

Response in a situation is one's self responsibility

- Self responsibility is the ability to respond (not mechanically react) in a given situation
- Self responsibility is not burden or blame



Factors in making a choice to respond

1) Self awareness



from Sri Bhagavad: the meditation course book

1) Self awareness

Self awareness: The power to be aware of my surroundings, my thoughts, emotions, desires, learning.

- The capacity to be aware is there in everyone.
- It may appear that under the sway of strong psychological reactions, awareness may disappear.
- Learning from experience is possible only in the light of my awareness of self and others.
- Awareness is not produced by our past like our habitual reactions of anger, sadness etc
- It provides us with a fresh start at any moment. At any moment we can just pause and be aware

Factor in making a choice to respond

II. Values



II. Values

- In the presence of self awareness, I become aware of values governing the situation - what is important to me and to the people in the situation.
- My power of discernment between the most helpful thing to do in the situation vis-à-vis the most non helpful thing to do in the situation is available to me.

For eg My academically bright 14 year old son returns from school to say that he has failed in the exam. If my value for academic success is higher than the child's overall well being, I am likely to react with anger.

III. Imagination

- Simply put, the power of imagination is the capacity to see WHAT IS and WHAT CAN BE in every situation.
- The capacity to imagine realistic and helpful ways, the capacity to imagine appropriate and no appropriate ways to improve the situation is there in all of us.
- The more we imagine the possibilities in a situation, greater are the available responses to choose from, in line with our values.
- The capacity to imagine possibilities is useful only when we start to exercise **our will power**.

Factor in making a choice to respond

IV. Will



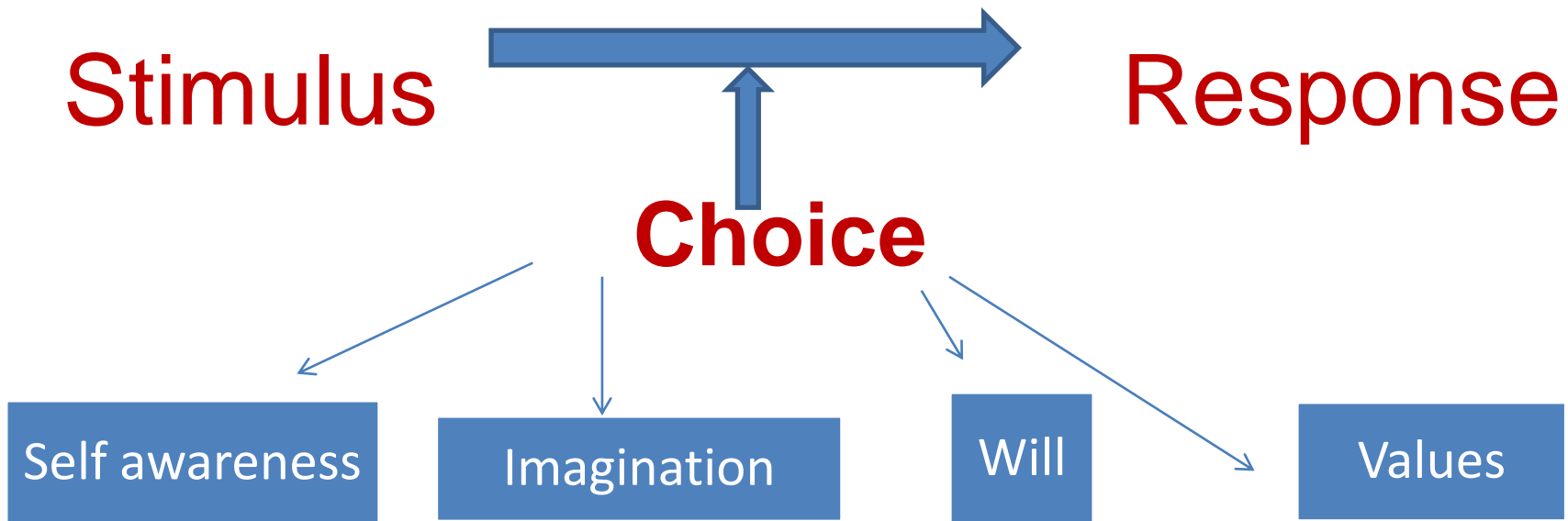
IV. Will

- In the presence of my **self awareness** – (sense data, thoughts, emotions, previous learning etc), I am aware of my **values** and the **possibilities** in the situation..
- What is it that translates all of these into an action?
Will power
- Will is the ability to delay gratification, resist short-term temptations in order to meet long-term goals and the capacity to override an unwanted thought, feeling or impulse. E.g When really angry, using the will to say, 'I will talk to you later' rather than victimising the person.

To recap: Each Life situation

Karmani eva adhikaarah te.... (Bhagavd Gita 2.47)

Your choice is in action only, never in the results thereof. Do not think you are the author of the results of action. Let your attachment not be to inaction.



If we don't use them (these powers), we lose them

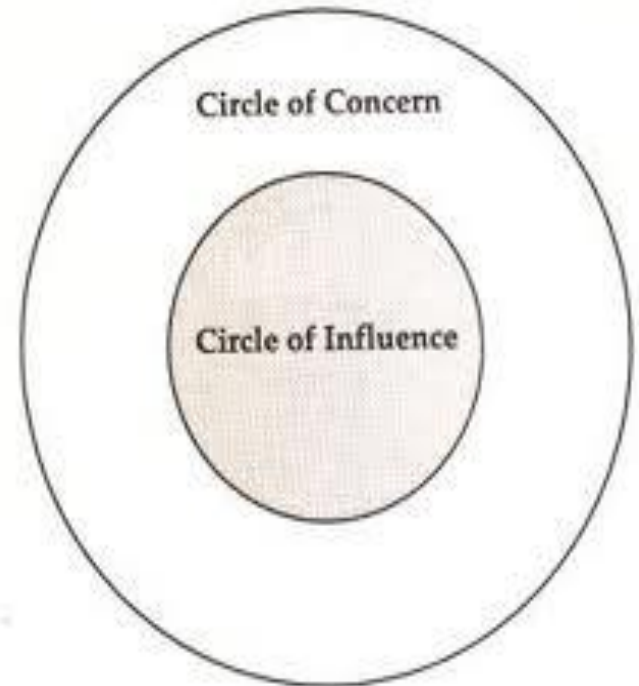
Exercises for small group discussions to formulate an awareful choice / response

- A man armed with a knife enters a ladies compartment. There are 20 ladies sitting inside. Are they helpless or do they have a choice? Ladies could scream, throw their bags at him, try and disarm him if trained in self defence.
- Your child fails in the 9th standard.
- Your spouse is having an extra marital affair
- Your partner is offered a transfer to another city

What kind of power do I really have?

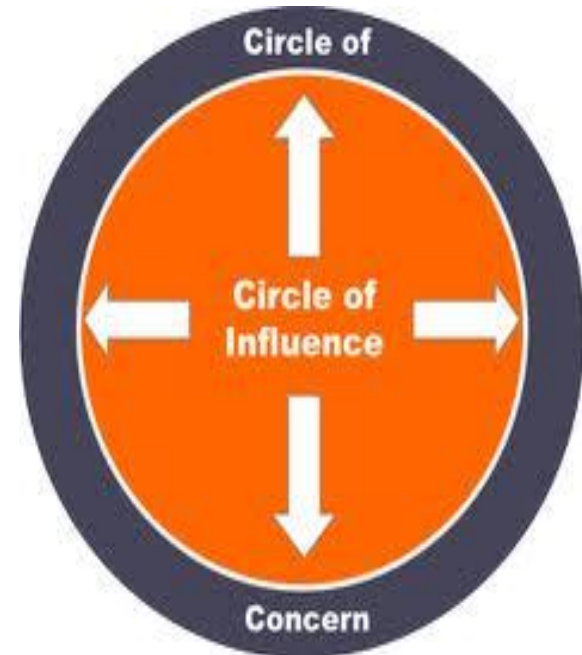
Circle of Concern vs Circle of Influence

- All of us have a wide range of concerns in our lives –our health, our family, in laws, the environment, etc.
 - Within this whole universe of our concerns, there are some things we can influence.
- There are some things we can only stay concerned about.



Using one 's power to increase the circle of influence

We can get annoyed about the shortcomings of other people, we can blame the government, the weather, a rotten childhood, bad luck. This focus leads to more and more blaming and accusing, to feelings of victimisation, 'poor me'. This negative way of thinking, accompanied by inaction to change things, results in the circle of influence shrinking.



We want to increase our circle of influence.

We focus on what we can do not on what we cannot do

Circle of Concern vs. Circle of Control

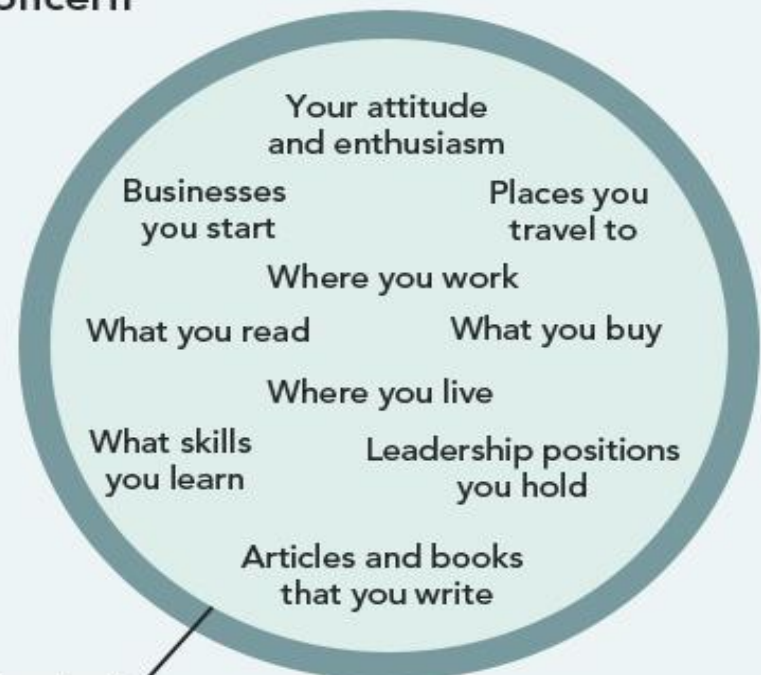
How Reactive People Act

Large Circle of Concern and a small Circle of Control. A lot of time and energy is wasted reacting to issues that they can't control.



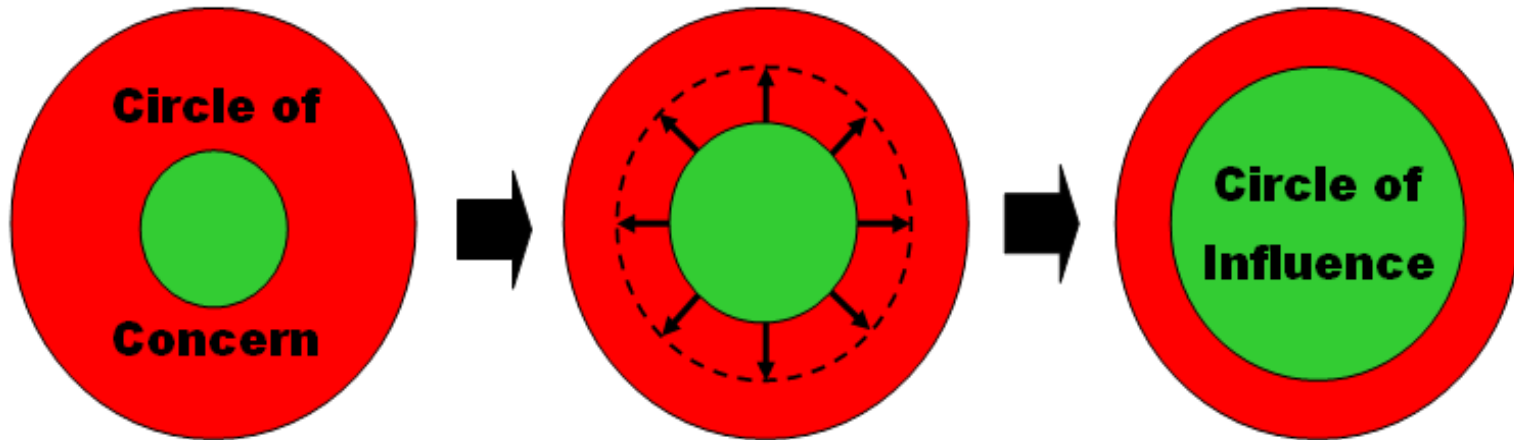
How Proactive People Act

Small Circle of Concern and a large Circle of Control. A lot of time and energy is focused on issues that are within their control.



Response using one's powers of awareness, one's values, imagination and will

Adopting a Proactive Focus



Reactive Focus

You focus the majority of your time and energy on your concerns and problems. You don't take responsibility for your own situation.

Changing Your Focus

You choose to redirect your time and energy. You begin focusing on those things within your control, and you start making a difference.

Proactive Focus

You devote the majority of your time and energy to changing what is in your control. Your life improves and you stop blaming others.

Homework

- Please complete the sentences with the first thought that comes to your mind. There are no right or wrong answers.
- Self responsibility to me means
- When I accept responsibility for my life that means...
- When I avoid responsibility for my life that means....
- If I accept 5% more responsibility for the achievement of my goals...
- If I accept 5% more responsibility for my happiness..
- If I accept 5% more responsibility for the words that come out of my mouth...
- I make myself helpless when...

Homework contd.

- If I take responsibility for my choices...
- A quick way to get out of my sense of helplessness is ..
- The more I am aware of myself..
- The more aware I am of my power of discrimination..
- The more aware I am of my will power...
- The more aware I am of my values
- Please discuss some or all of the above responses with your buddy as decided in the workshop. Identify a situation/s where it is difficult to respond. In the light of the paradigm discussed earlier share your choice of response and discuss with your buddy.