

My life in my hands

Session II

Aarsha Vidya Foundation

About Vedic Wisdom for a fulfilling life



Programme of 6 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 that 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**

PROGRAMME: VEDIC WISDOM FOR A FULFILLING LIFE

Session	Topic	Attachment
I	Who am I? Where do I come from? How does my past flow into my present?-Freeing oneself from the conditionings of past	Session I_Who am I
II	My life in my hands – Moving into a deeper self acceptance and creating your own destiny.Accepting who you are, what you are and starting to master your life	Session II_My life in my hands
III	Think clearly and feel deeply- Discovering emotional balance	Session III_Think clearly.Feel deeply. Act decisively
IV	Where are you headed in life? Finding deepest priorities and learning to live in harmony with these.	Session IV_Discovering priorities
V	Building understanding and connectedness with people by learning to communicate	Session V_Building understanding and connectedness
VI	What is Dharma? What is Dharma centered living?	Session VI_Dharma centered living

Your response to situations that life may throw at you

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

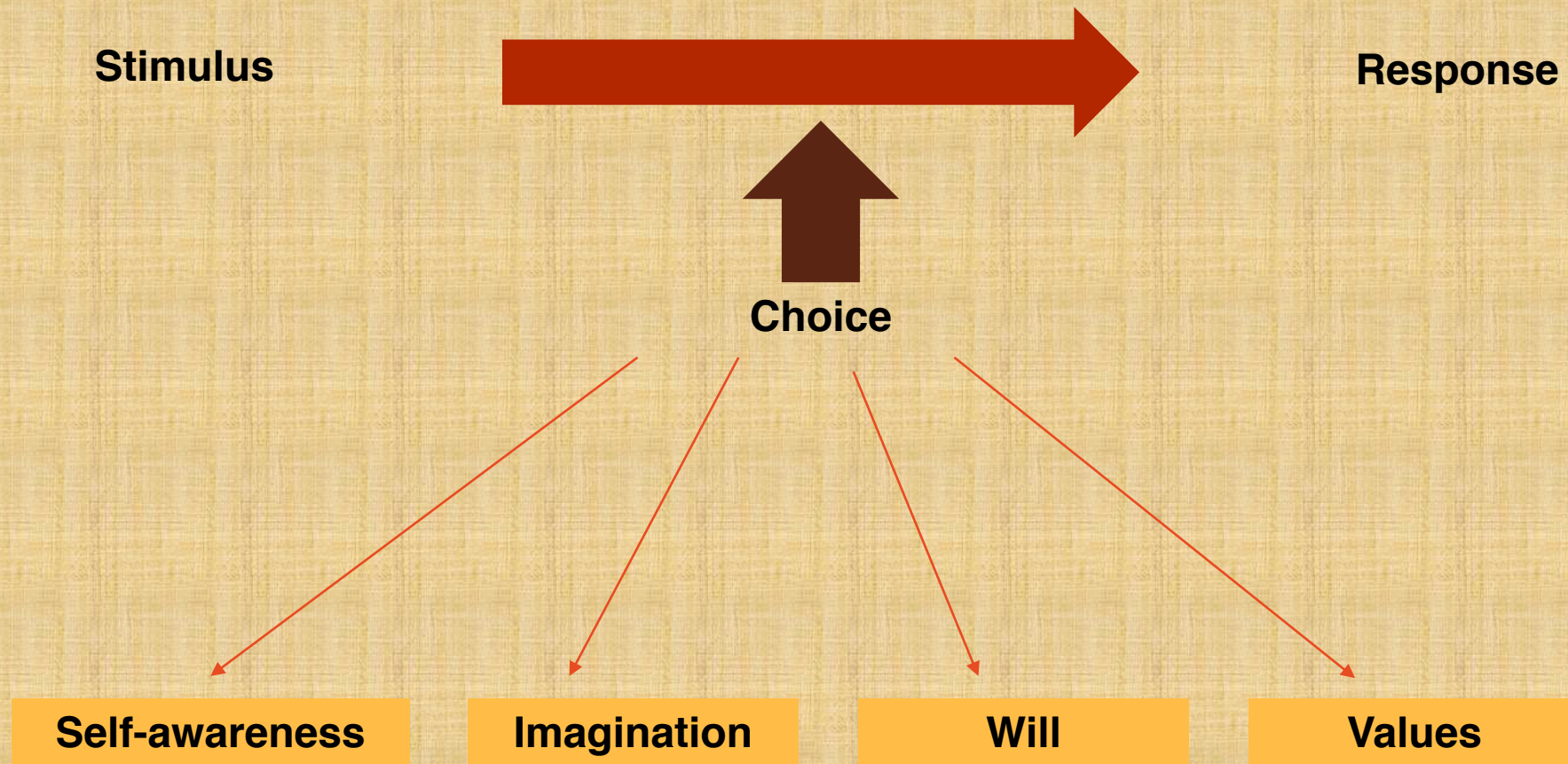
Simply put, life is a series of situations where one needs to respond.

- 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

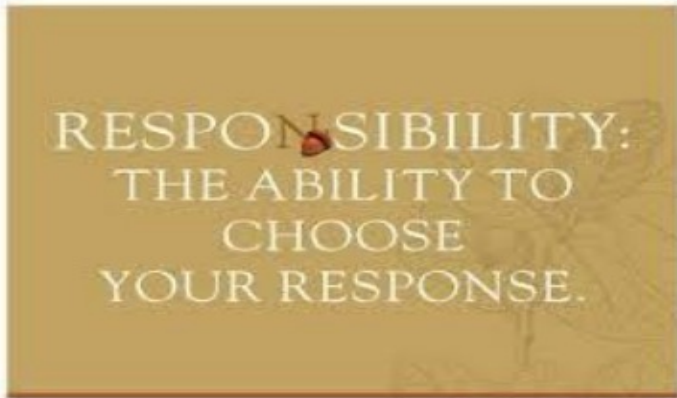
BUT

There are many factors that determine a response.

Role of choice in a response: Factors that determine a response



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 each situation**
- Self-responsibility is **not burden or blame**

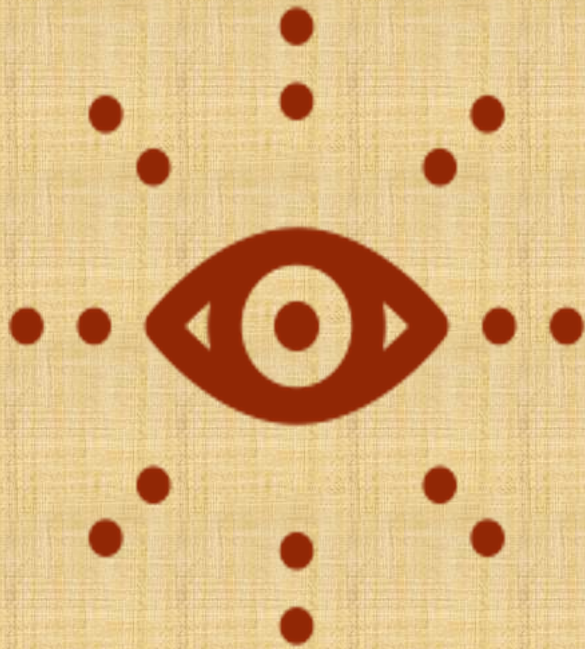


Factors that determine a response: Self Awareness



From Dr. Ramesh Chandra's meditation course (2008)

Factors that determine a response: Self Awareness



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

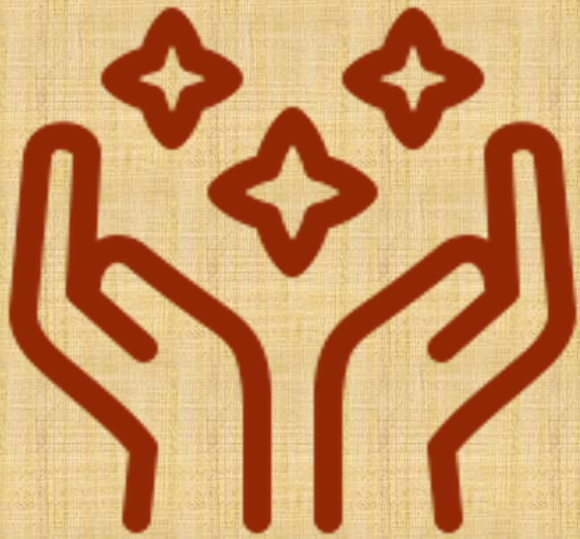
- The capacity to be aware is **there in everyone**
- It may appear that, under the sway of strong psychological reactions, **awareness may disappear**
- Learning from experience is possible only in the light of **my awareness of self and others**
- Awareness is **not produced by our past** like our 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

Factors that determine a response: Values



Factors that determine a response: Values

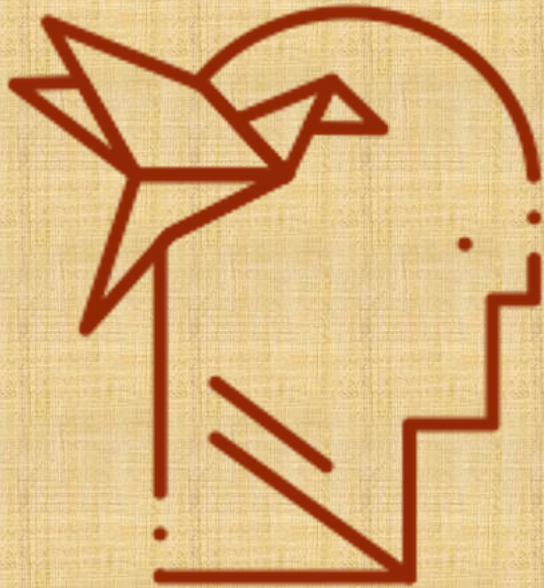


- In the presence of self awareness, **I become aware of values governing the situation** - what is important to me and to the people in the situation.
- My **power of discernment between** the most helpful thing to do in the situation vis-à-vis the most non helpful thing to do in the situation is available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

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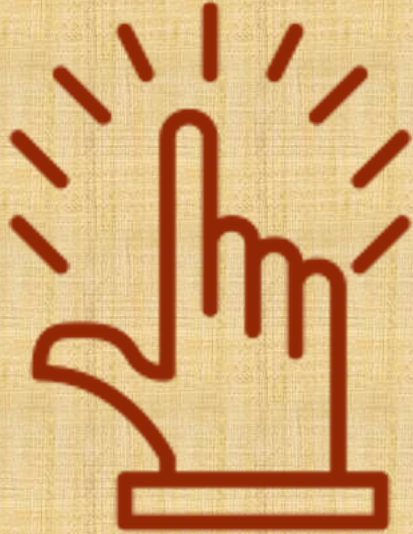


Factors that determine a response: Imagination



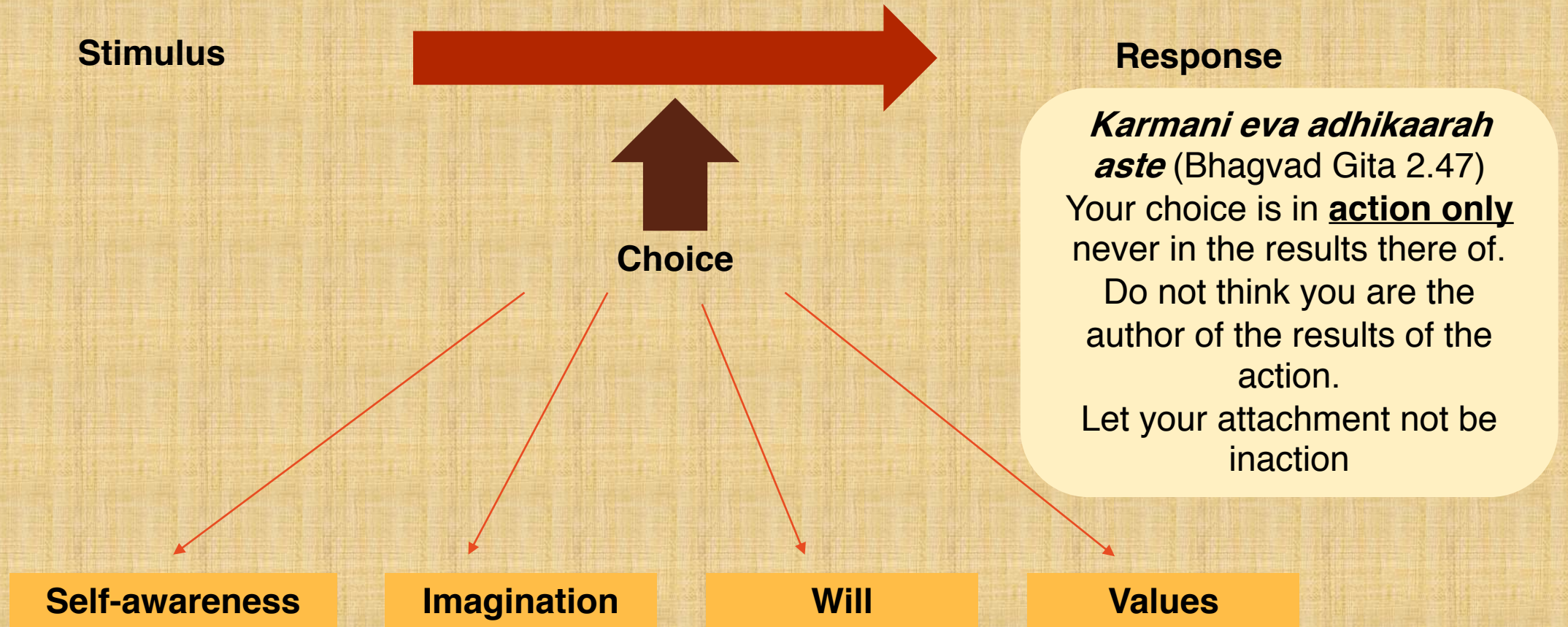
- Simply put, the power of imagination is the capacity to see WHAT IS and WHAT CAN BE in every situation.
- The capacity to imagine realistic and helpful ways, the capacity to imagine appropriate and no appropriate ways to improve the situation is there in all of us.
- The more we imagine the possibilities 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.

Factors that determine a response: Will Power



- 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 angry, using the will to say, 'I will talk to you later' rather than victimizing the person.

Role of choice in a response: Recap



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

Formulating an awareful choice: Exercises for a small group discussion

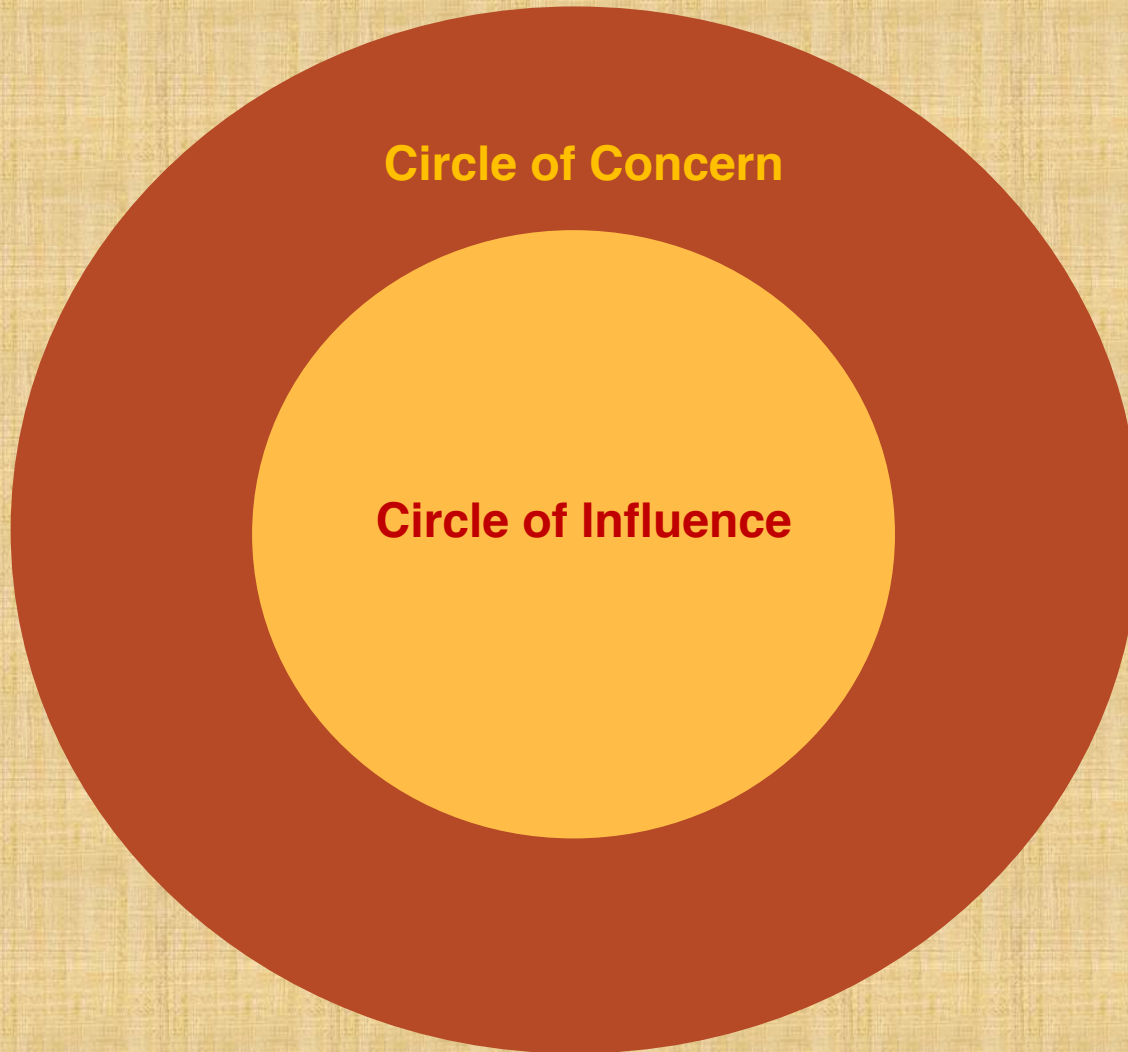
- A man armed with a knife enters a ladies' compartment. There are 20 ladies sitting inside.

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.

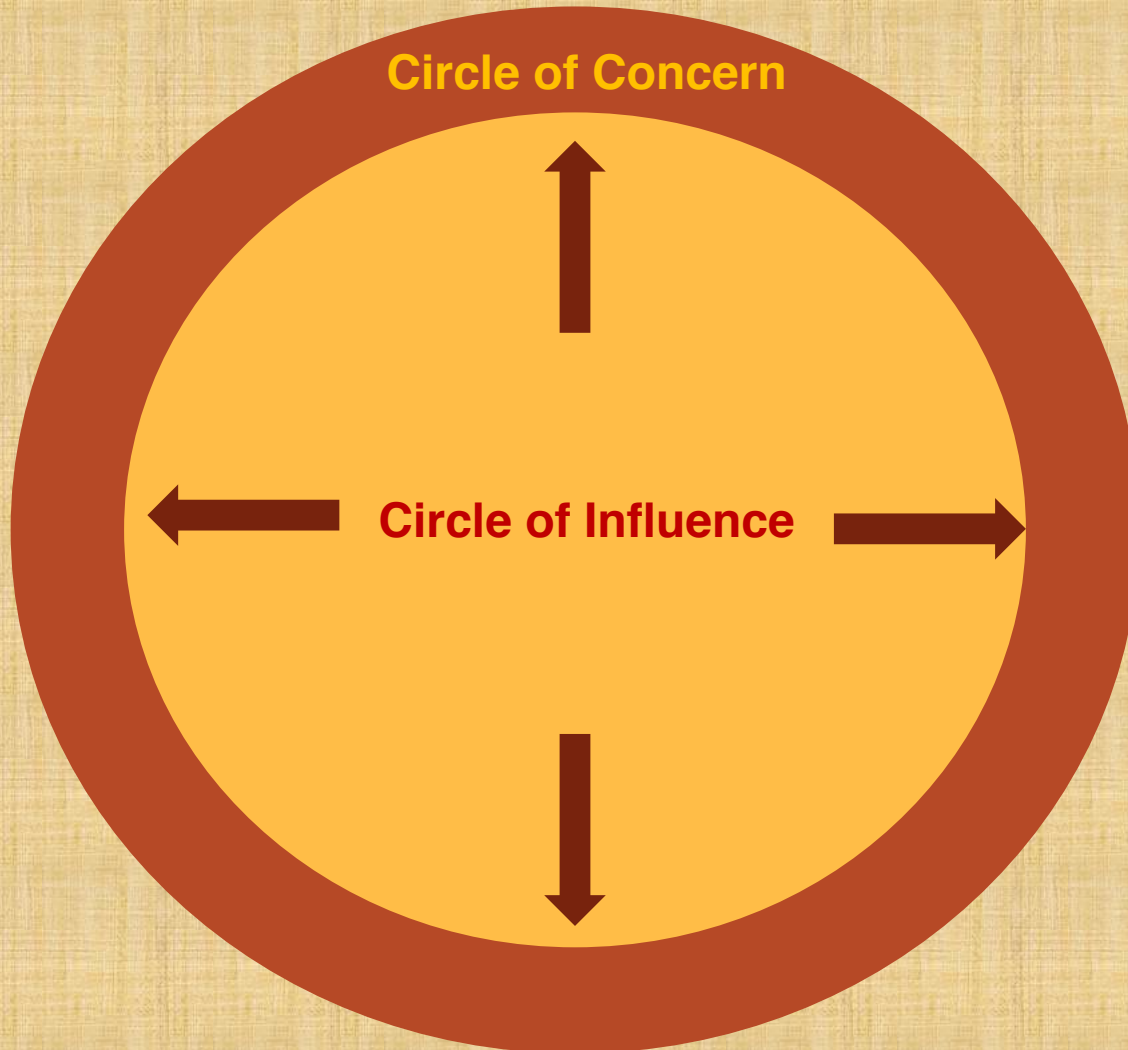
- Your child fails in the 9th standard.
- Your spouse is having an extra marital affair
- Your partner is offered a transfer to another city

What kind of power do I really have?



- **Circle of concern versus 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 (Circle of Influence)**.
- There are some **things we can only stay concerned about and are out of our influence and control (Circle of Concern)**

What kind of power do I really have?



- 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

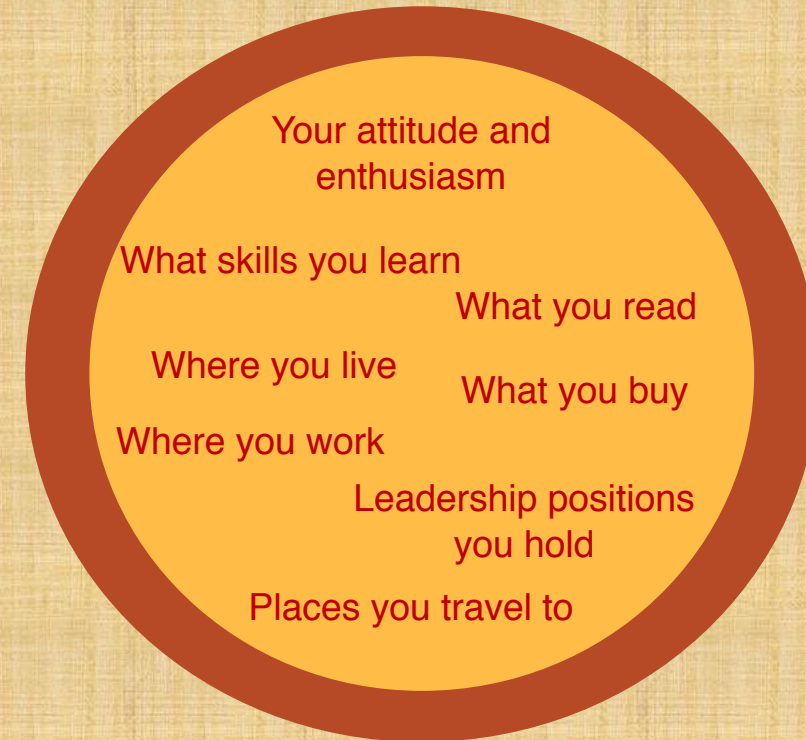
How reactive people act:

Large circle of concern and small circle of influence, a lot of time and energy is wasted reacting to issues they cannot control



How proactive people act:

Small circle of concern and large circle of influence, a lot of time and energy is wasted reacting to issues they cannot control



Circle of Concern

Circle of Influence

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

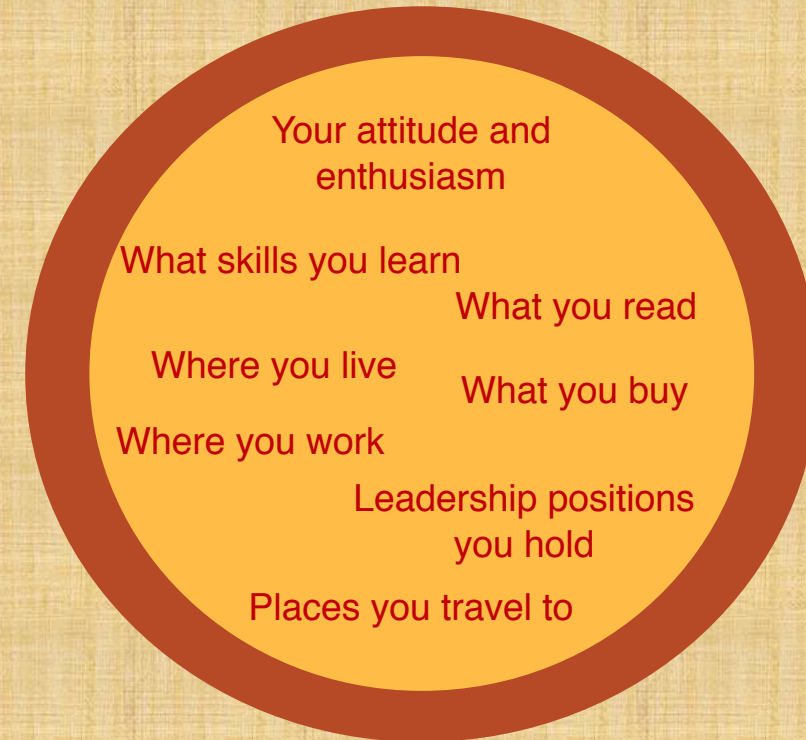
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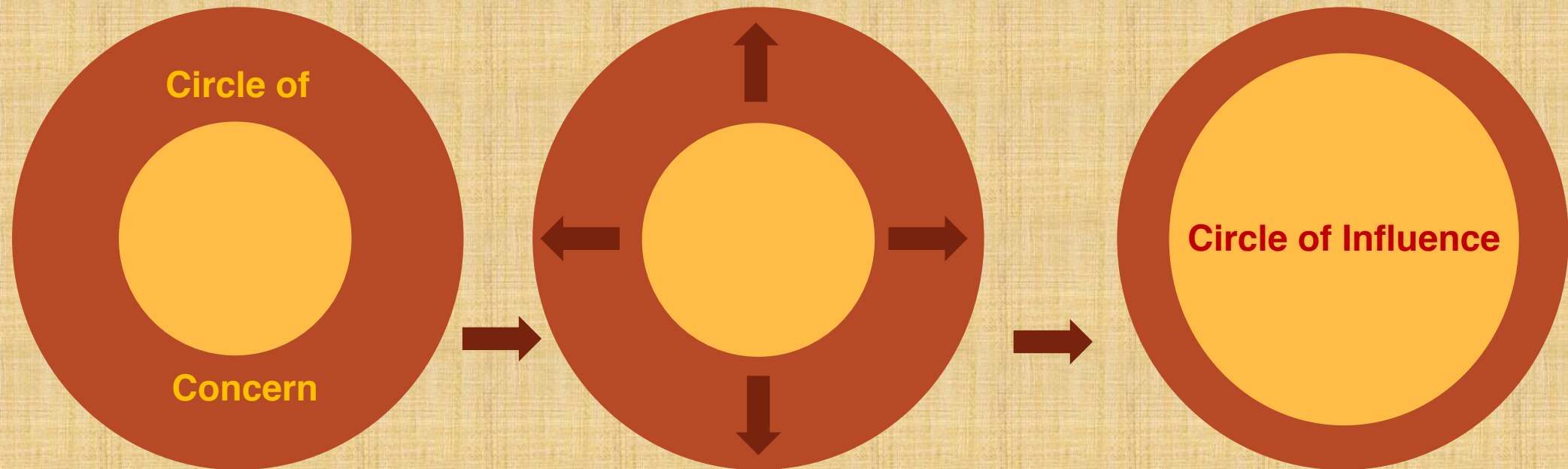


Circle of Concern

Circle of Influence

Response using one's power, awareness, values, imagination and will

Adopting a Proactive Focus



Reactive Focus:

You focus majority of your time and energy on your concern and your problems. You don't take responsibility for your 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 majority of your time and energy to changing what is in your control. Your life improves and you stop blaming others

Circle of Concern

Circle of Influence

Exercises

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...

Exercises

Please complete the sentences with the first thought that comes to your mind. There are no right or wrong answers. .

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 a friend. Identify a situation/s where it is difficult to respond. In the light of the paradigm presented earlier share your choice of response and discuss with your friend)

Thank you