



Hi gang,

Welcome to my newsletter. I hope you all enjoyed my last newsletter on **“Being a pro-active leader”**. If you even got a little out of it, it should help you in understanding the importance of being a great leader and what it takes.

In this newsletter I was trying to come up with a subject that would have an immediate impact on you and your team moving forward. So, for this reason I decided to discuss something important that aligns not only with the execution of your personal and professional development, but also should bring awareness of what we can and cannot control in our lives. One of my favorite experts in the field of personal development is Dr. Covey. He does an excellent job of putting into perspective just how much influence we have over our lives. It is a main topic of Habit Four in his *The 7 Habits* book. I hope this newsletter will help you in see this. So, let’s get started at understanding the:

“Circle of Influence”

Understanding your **“Circle of Influence”** will be vitally important to your ability to control your environment and succeed. Finding the path to avoid focusing your energy on the **“Circle of Concern”** is equally important because it causes you to be distracted over things you have no control over. In this newsletter we will discuss both.

At work, how many times have you found yourself in the situation where you struggled to deliver upon a deadline, task, or project and said to yourself:

“It wasn’t my fault I didn’t get it done because Joe didn’t get back to me with the information I needed!”

“I would have completed it but I was told I had to deliver on another assignment!”

“I couldn’t complete it because I sent an email to my boss asking if the direction I was taking was right and he never got back to me!”

At home, how many times have you focused on the dark side of the moon? You know what I am talking about.

“I can’t believe it, we were going on a picnic with the family this weekend and the weather is supposed to be lousy. This sucks!”

“Every time I buy a new TV my brother-in law always buys a bigger and better one.”

“I don’t want to go to Annie’s for dinner because Betty says she thinks I have been talking bad about her even though I haven’t been.”

Sound familiar?

Think of the negative impact this had on you. Worse than that, how many times did you take it upon yourself to share these negative feelings with your peers, friends, and fellow employees? Think of the destructive influence these conversations can have on them, the organization or your relationships.

There is no doubt we have all been there at one point or another, but when we were, why didn’t we take the time to think it through and realize the control, **“Influence”** we had over this? At times we find it easier to blame something, or worse, someone for not accomplishing our task, our frustration, or not getting what we want. We try to justify that they are the reason for our frustrations. Instead why not understand what you could do to succeed, act on it, and eliminate these frustrations?

Why, because it is easier to lay blame, then to take responsibility. I am not pointing fingers here. I am only stating the facts of human nature. But what if you could change all that? What if you made different decisions? What if you took the time to find different solutions?

Let's look at the same situations but this time put a different, more proactive twist on them:

"I was able to accomplish the objective because I followed up with Joe to get the information in a timely manner. I checked with him on the schedule we agreed upon to discuss and to ensure we didn't miss anything."

"I was able to deliver the result but it took some clarification because I was asked to perform another task by Mark who felt his requirement was more important. After checking with my manager it was determined I needed to stay on my task at hand. I got back to Mark and we rescheduled his requirement to a later date."

"I was able to finish the project with a little persistence on my part getting my managers time for answers. We definitely couldn't delay getting his answer so we persisted until we nailed him down."

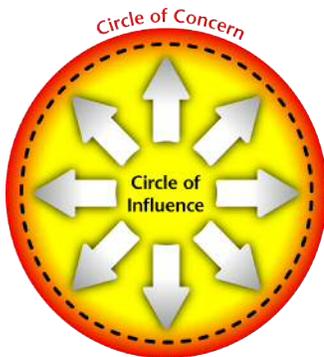
"We were really planning on having a family activity this weekend but the weather is not cooperating, so we decided to buy pizza and play board games."

"I love my new TV. I know my brother-in law just got one, but I got the one I wanted and really enjoy it."

"We went to dinner at Annie's, and it gave me an opportunity to chat with her about what Betty is saying. Because of that, I realized there was nothing to worry about and we had a wonderful dinner."

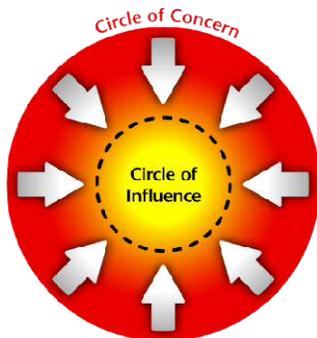
As you can see, we all have ability to influence the outcome of our concerns if we want to. However it is up to us whether or not we act on them. We can take the **"I will make this happen"** approach or, the **"It's not my problem, I shouldn't have to do this"** approach. I want you to think about these choices.

Depending on what choice you make, one of two things will occur:



Choice #1 "I will make this happen"

By making choice #1 you are willing to accept the responsibility to make it happen. You now become accountable for achieving the result. Many times we are afraid of this approach because accountability is a very daunting challenge. Once you accept being accountable it can create a fear of failure. But by making the choice to be accountable you create a recipe for fulfillment, high energy, and success!



Choice #2 "It is not my problem, I shouldn't have to do this"

By making choice #2 you create the false belief that you can absolve yourself from taking responsibility when something doesn't happen. This tack creates the illusion that if you fail; it is ok, even if you didn't do what you should have. It also creates the "Blame Game", that destructive contribution to humanity that accomplishes nothing and takes away the very power you have, the ability to succeed and participate in achievement!

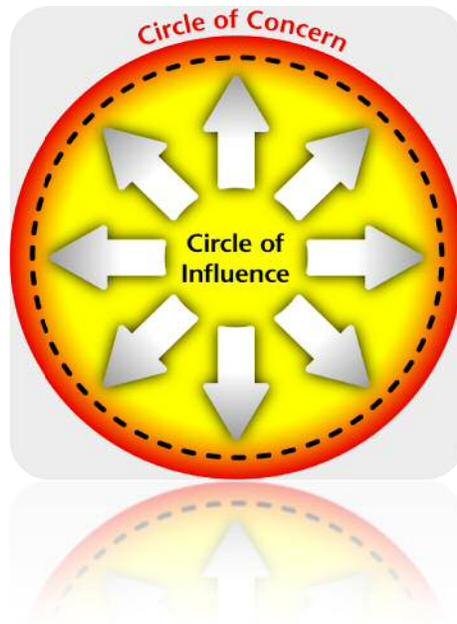
So, where do we go from here? Let's put this into practice. It is critical that all of us accept the challenge in front of us and look to support our staff, peers, and employees at being successful on delivering upon their plans.

I challenge you to take a look and review your plans and take a proactive approach of trying to determine where the **"Circle of Concern"** could creep in and affect your ability to deliver. The best way to avoid it from happening is to create an awareness and anticipation of what you can do to affect it. This way, you can prepare yourself with those positive alternatives to eliminate it. So prioritize your keys to success. Answering these few questions will help you in being successful in delivering against you and your teams plans.

- 1. What departments do I need support from to be successful?**
 - a. Have **you** made it clear to them what is needed?
 - b. Have **you** clarified the expectations with measurable milestones?
- 2. Who are the key decision makers in those departments so that I can confirm my support needs with them.**
 - a. Before you start, have **you** discussed with them one-with-one what your needs are?
 - b. Have **you** set up regular meetings to discuss progress during the year?
- 3. What are your key deliverables that you need to focus on in order to be successful.**
 - a. Do **you** understand them clearly?
 - b. Have **you** ensured your support team understands them clearly?
- 4. What support do you require from you manager and his\her peers in order to be successful?**
 - a. Have **you** ensured they know what your expectations of them are in order to clear the path for success?
 - b. Have **you** set up regular meetings to discuss the progress and continued support?
- 5. What support is required from you and your department in order to help your peers and other departments to be successful?**
 - a. Have **you** met with your peers to understand their expectations from **you** and your department in order to support them?
 - b. Have **you** clearly defined your expectations from your team?

The **you** is bold for a reason because **you** control whether **you** increase the **"Center of Concern"**, or the **"Center of Influence"**.

Are you willing to increase the size of your “Circle of Influence”?



After reading this newsletter, I hope you understand the control you have over your success or failure. You have the ability to increase your **“Circle of Influence”** and reduce the impact of your **“Circle of Concern”**.

Take control! Make the right choice. Once you do, the ability to succeed will become endless. Ultimately you will get what you want, you will succeed! Why not take control of your **“Circle of Influence”** now and do it on your terms! Be the leader you are meant to be.

Looking forward, please take time to review and contemplate what you have read today. Ask yourself the questions that have been presented to you. My challenge to you is to think, accept, and seize control of your **“Circle of Influence!”**

Cheers