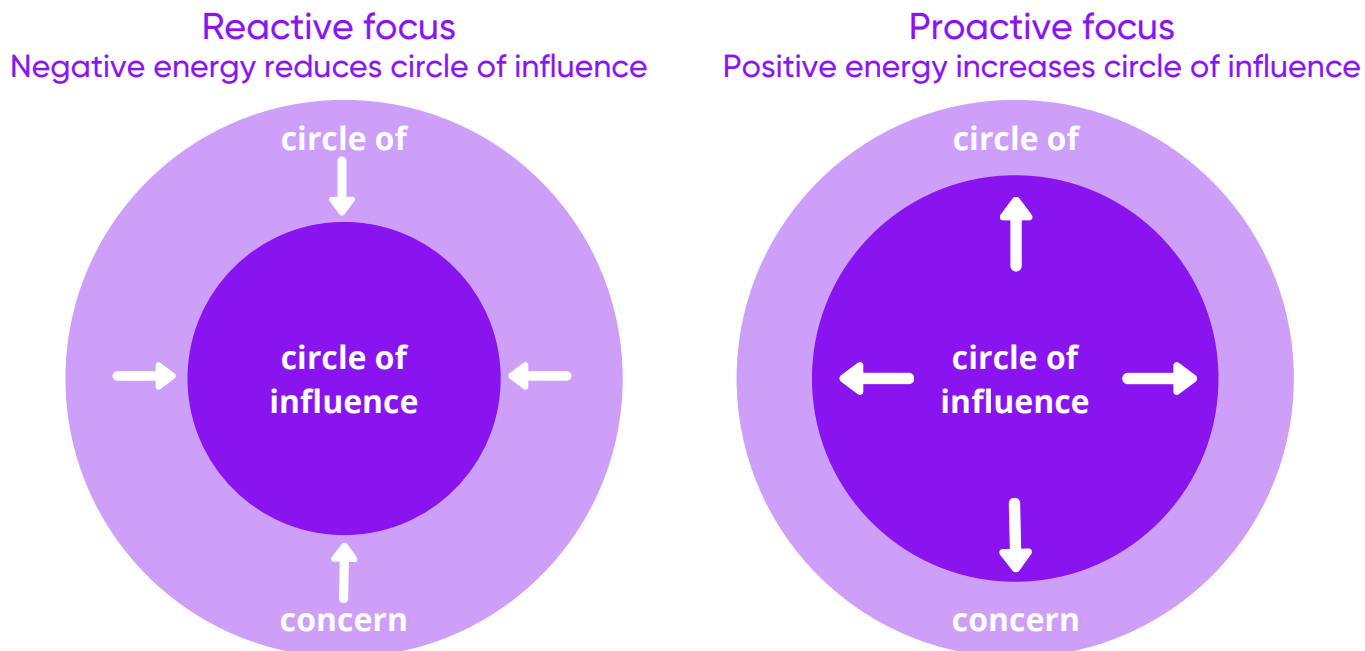


Circle of Influence, Circle of Concern - Stephen Covey

In his book the *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989) Covey distinguishes between **proactive people** – who focus on what they can do and can influence, and **reactive people** who focus their energy on things beyond their control.

Reactive people often maintain an attitude of victimisation and blame.

The model is based on two circles:



The first is our **circle of concern**.

This includes a whole range of things – the environment, the state of the economy, politics, attitudes in society, the organisation you work for, the things your colleagues do, the way people drive their cars etc.

The actual list will depend on the individual, but the important thing to recognise is that there is little you can do about these things as they are **outside your influence**.

Focusing your attention and spending energy on them can be a waste of time – and time and energy once spent cannot be reused.

Our **circle of influence** will be much smaller.

It includes the things we **can** do something about.

The extent of this is related to your power – as a Leader you will have more influence and that grows with your career and network.

The key is to **focus your energy on those things that you can influence**, enabling you to make effective changes.

If you do this you will find your **circle of influence starts to increase** – others will see you as an effective person and this will increase your power.



Conversely, if all your energy is focused on those things you can't change, your circle of influence will shrink.

Not only will you drain your energy; other people may start to see you as unduly negative and critical.

Knowing how far your circle of influence extends is an important aspect of personal effectiveness.

Forming [partnerships and alliances may extend your influence](#) – you may not have any direct influence over something in your Circle of Concern, but you may know other people who do. A team can have a wider circle of influence than an individual.

[Reactive people find their circle of influence shrinks, while proactive people find that it increases.](#)

For more information: [The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, by Stephen Covey.](#)

