

**Circles of Control - Focusing Your Energy Where It Actually Matters**

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We often spend a lot of mental energy trying to control things that aren't within our control. When this happens, stress and frustration increase. We replay conversations in our minds, worry about what others think of us, and try to predict outcomes before they happen. The mind attempts to manage everything. The more we attempt to control the uncontrollable, the more stressed and frustrated we feel.

A helpful question is this:

*Is this within my control?*

Learning to separate what you can control from what you cannot brings immediate clarity. Decisions become simpler and our energy becomes better directed.

**The Circle of Control**

The circle of control is smaller than most people initially expect, but it is also where your real power sits. This circle contains the things that depend on your choices and actions.

You can control your effort, preparation, behaviour, words and boundaries. You can also influence how you interpret events and how you respond when things do not go as planned.

What you cannot control are outcomes — other people's reactions, opinions, or decisions.

For example, consider a job interview. You cannot control whether you are offered the job. You can control how well you prepare and how you present yourself.

The same principle applies in relationships. You cannot control another person's feelings, but you can control whether you behave with honesty, respect, and integrity.

When attention returns to what is inside your circle of control, anxiety often decreases. People feel steadier because their focus shifts away from worrying about outcomes and back towards meaningful action.

### **What You Cannot Control**

Outside the circle of control are the parts of life that unfold independently of your wishes. This includes other people's opinions, unexpected setbacks, economic changes, the passage of time, and many aspects of the future.

Acceptance of this reality is not weakness. It is psychological efficiency.

When we try to wrestle with things that cannot be controlled, we drain energy without improving the situation. Worry can feel productive because the mind is busy, but in many cases it is simply an attempt to solve problems that cannot be solved.

Letting go of the illusion of control is freeing. Instead of asking, *How do I make everything work out?*, the question becomes: *What is the next action that sits within my control?*

### **Practical Ways to Use the Circle of Control**

This becomes most useful when you apply it to real situations. When you feel overwhelmed, pause and ask yourself one simple question: *Is this inside my circle of control?*

For example, during financial uncertainty, you cannot control global markets or interest rates. But you can control how carefully you spend, how consistently you save, and how thoughtfully you plan.

In a disagreement, you cannot control another person's reaction. But you can control the tone of your words and the respect you bring to the conversation.

When your focus returns to what you can control, anxiety often decreases.

Life will always contain uncertainty. When attention returns to what you can control, people often feel calmer and more capable. Progress is built by repeatedly taking the next right action within your control.

Focus your energy where it matters. Act where you have control, and allow the rest to unfold.



**A Quick Control Check-In**

Pause and ask yourself:

- Is this within my control?
- If not, can I let it go?
- What is one action I can take that is within my control?

**Key Idea**

Focusing on what you can control reduces unnecessary stress and helps you direct your energy where it matters most.