

An introduction to
Stephen Covey's...

CIRCLE OF CONCERN

CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

Take control of your stress today

BY MICHELLE MCCLINTOCK

GET BACK IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

When we feel stressed, anxious or fearful in life, it is usually because we are trying to control things we cannot control.

At some level, the brain recognises it has no control, and this creates a **stress response**.

The **stress response** is the emergency response system of your body. It's also known as the “fight or flight” response, and it's there to keep you safe in life threatening emergencies. But it can get triggered any time you feel **threatened, intimidated, under attack, out of your depth or simply when you feel you are not in control of situations, people or things you care about**. The stress response includes physical, emotional and thought responses to your perception of various situations.

In his book, **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People**, Stephen R. Covey came up with a useful way of thinking about these situations so you can get back in the driver's seat quickly.

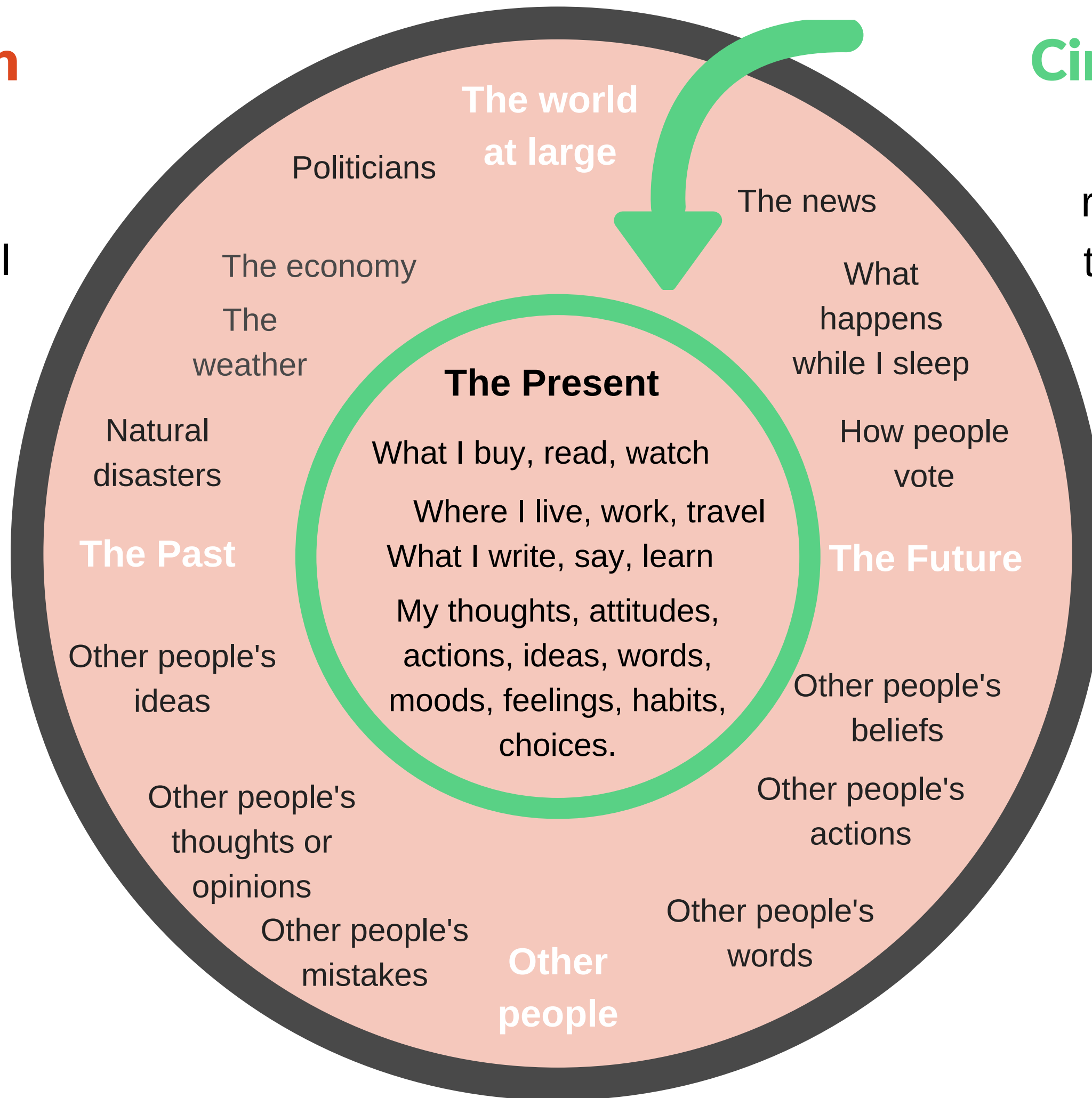
Circle of Concern

Things I am not responsible for and things I cannot control



Focusing Here =

Reactivity,
Increased Stress,
Feeling Like
Victim,
Hopeless, Helpless



Circle of Influence

Things I am responsible for and things I can control

Focusing Here =

Proactive,
Decreased Stress,
Feeling
Empowered,
Hopeful, Optimistic

ACTIVITY

Draw Your Circle Of Concern & Circle of Influence

Draw two circles just like the picture above - or you can draw them next to each other, or on two separate pieces of paper. Whatever works for you!

Label one '**Circle of Concern**' and inside the circle write down all the things in your life you feel concerned about, care about, feel worried or stressed about.

Label the other '**Circle of Influence**' and using the guide on the previous page, start to reflect on and write down all the things you CAN ACTUALLY CONTROL. This list may be smaller. That's ok!

Try to consciously shift your attention, focus and energy to the things inside your **Circle of Influence**. What can you control in your life right now? How can you do more of these things?

Every time you feel stressed or anxious, review what you have written down in your **Circle of Influence** and then consider the 10 suggestions on the next page

10 Ways To Grow Your Circle Of Influence

1. Focus on the things you can control
2. Accept the things you cannot control
3. Choose the feelings you want to have
4. Decide how you are going to respond
5. Set clear intentions for your interactions with others
6. Anchor your actions in your values
7. Reframe events to the most empowering meaning
8. Adopt a positive attitude
9. Choose proactive language
10. Create character building habits

Circle of Influence & Concern from Stephen Covey's "7 Habits of Highly Effective People"



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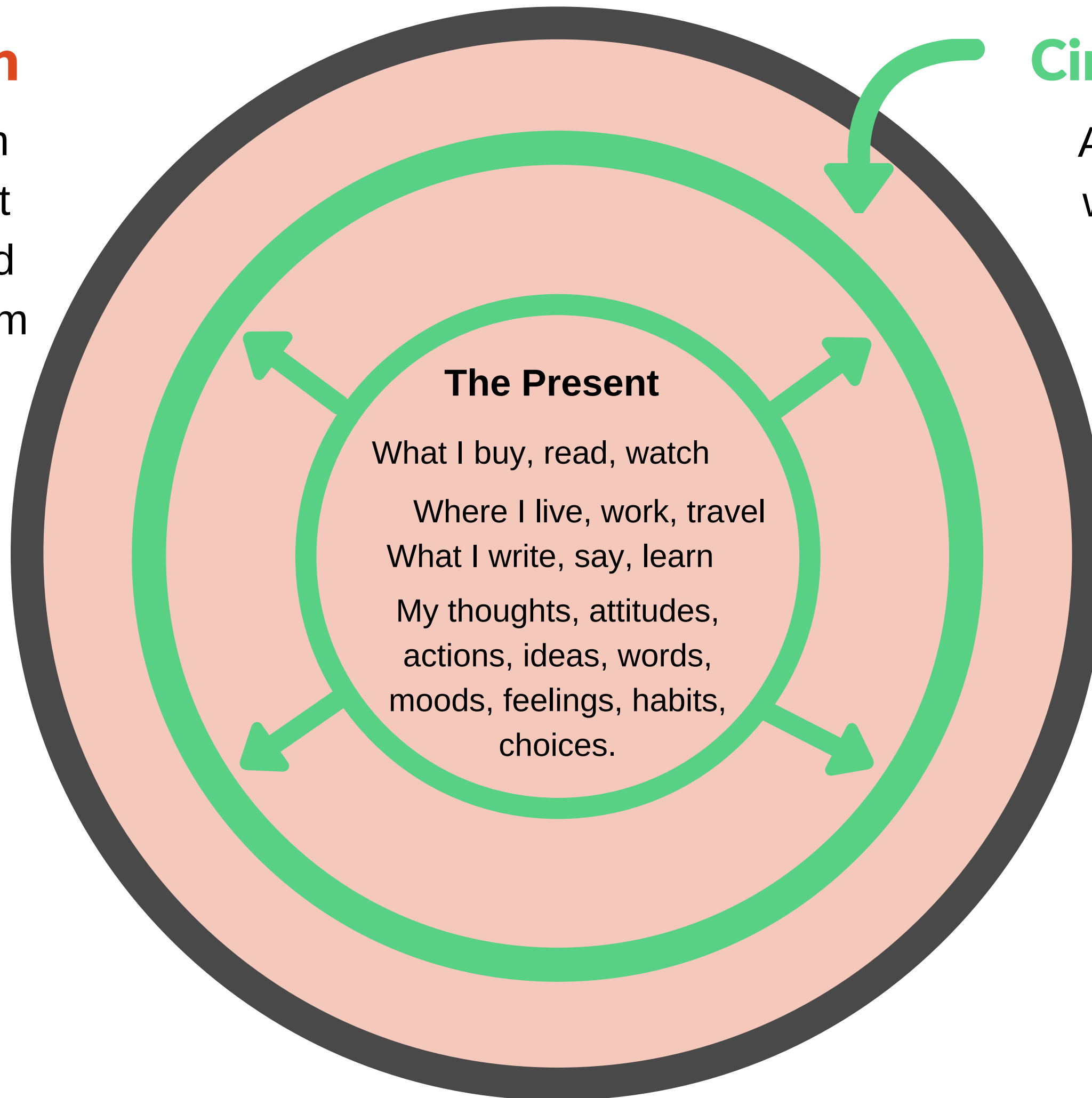
Circle of Concern

Reduce your focus on things that you cannot control, accept life and people as you find them



Be Mindful

Am I feeling stressed, overwhelmed, irritable, annoyed, frustrated??



Circle of Influence

As you focus more on what you can control, your Circle of Influence begins to expand

Ask Yourself

What, if anything, can I do in the present moment about the situation?

"When you shift your focus to the present moment and what you can control, stress vanishes..."

Michelle McClintock