



What are you going to focus on?



DO YOU FOCUS ON...  
what you *can* or *can't* control?

# Do you focus on things that excite you or things that you fear?

**Realize that whatever you focus on, you experience — because, wherever focus goes, energy flows. If you're constantly directing focus on what you can't control, how are you going to feel?**

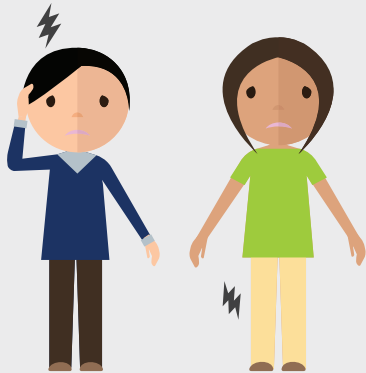
Some combination of frustration, anger, anxiety and fear — and what truthfully happens is you feel all of these emotions and these emotions become your experience. Remember, it's unhelpful to constantly focus on what's wrong or missing if your desire is to make it better. Unless you're taking action to create real change, you'll have no chance to sustain joy unless your focus is directed toward your goal.



# The Truth:

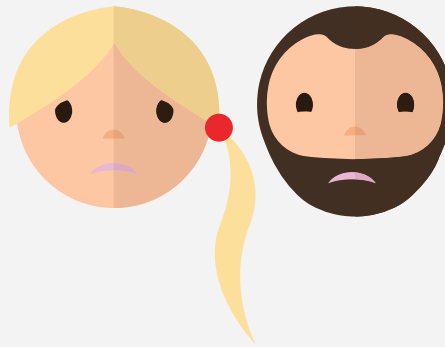
Worrying about circumstances outside your control will lead to unwanted stress. Just consider the physiological and emotional toll it can take on your body:<sup>1</sup>

## Body:



Headache  
Muscle tension or pain  
Chest pain  
Fatigue  
Stomach upset  
Sleep problems

## Mood:



Anxiety  
Restlessness  
Lack of motivation or focus  
Irritability or anger  
Sadness or depression

## Behavior:



Overeating or under-eating  
Angry outbursts  
Substance use and abuse  
Social withdrawal

# Take Back Control

Focusing on variables beyond your control can be a drain on your time, your thoughts, your emotions and your mental clarity. Fulfilled, happy people practice conscious awareness of what's beyond their control and don't allow it to create stress. When an outside event affects their lives, they quickly discern "Is this something I can control? Or, is this truly something I cannot control and cannot influence?"

Many of us habitually try to control the events around us. Although we can influence many events and maybe control some, the only aspects in life we have absolute control over are our emotional responses, our decisions and our actions.

Consider all the factors you cannot control, but that you can exercise influence over: the opinions of those you care about most, peers you do business with and certain events that fall within this purview. But you must be realistic about the things you absolutely cannot control, such as other people's opinions and behavior — no matter how hard you try.



**EXERCISE:** Whenever you find yourself feeling out of control, ask yourself:

1. How can I focus my energy on those things I can control and influence?
2. What empowering meaning can be drawn from this event? How do these meanings contribute to a life that is not only fulfilling for me, but that's also beneficial to others?
3. What steps do I need to take to let go of the things that are causing me to experience and perpetuate stress?



DO YOU FOCUS ON...  
what you *have* or *what's missing*?

# “Your philosophy of life shapes you more than anything else.” — Tony Robbins

**Some people respond to the world by finding sameness.**

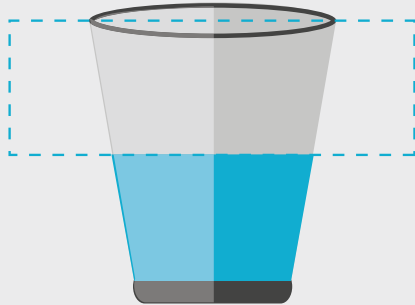
They look at experiences and events and see what’s present, what’s correct and what’s working well. They’re called “matchers.” Other people are “mismatchers” — they primarily take notice of what isn’t present, what’s different or what’s wrong. While both types notice different aspects of the same experience, both are still moving toward their goals, albeit from different directions.

Learning how to maintain a neutral viewpoint will allow you to identify both the positive and negative, without allowing your focus to drift and dwell on what you can’t control and don’t want for yourself.



# The Truth:

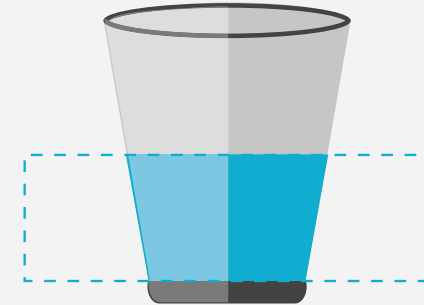
When you focus on what's missing from your life, you will be left with feelings of emptiness and unhappiness. In order to catch yourself, it is important that you recognize the most common traits and beliefs of unhappy people.



## Here are seven pitfalls to avoid:<sup>2</sup>

1. Belief that life is hard
2. Belief that people can't be trusted
3. Concentration on what's wrong versus what's right
4. You compare yourself to others and harbor jealousy
5. You strive to control everything in your life
6. You look toward the future with worry and fear
7. You fill your conversations with gossip and complaints

When you focus on what you do have, you will experience true gratitude. Training yourself for gratefulness will create endless opportunities for you.



## Here are just seven benefits of gratitude:<sup>3</sup>

1. Opens the door to new relationships
2. Improved physical health
3. Improved psychological health
4. Enhanced empathy and reduced aggression
5. Better, more satisfying sleep
6. Improved self esteem
7. Increased mental strength



# Get Grounded

The key to success — and feeling fulfilled in the process — is to understand that while we don't have control over many of the universal forces that bring about change, we do have control over how we respond to this change and what we choose to focus on.

One of the simplest and most intuitive tools we can use to navigate through life is the ability to understand the Spheres of Influence: the three primary areas of activity that make up our lives.

**Sphere 1:** Work – your profession, career, or the work you are compensated to do.

**Sphere 2:** Self – your mental, physical, spiritual and emotional growth and well-being.

**Sphere 3:** Relationships – your family, friends and community.

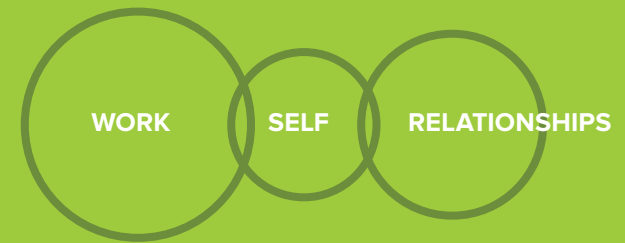
Like the legs of a three-legged stool, the three Spheres of Influence are all necessary to maintain stability. All three represent important facets of life and one sphere is not necessarily more or less important than any other.

The key is to learn how to balance these three spheres in a way that is unique to your needs but also allows you to change and progress over time, allowing you to feel fulfilled rather than empty. By identifying the unique relationship between these 3 spheres for yourself, you will be able to focus on what's you have in your life and constructively focus on where you want to go, rather than what is missing.

## ACTION PLAN:

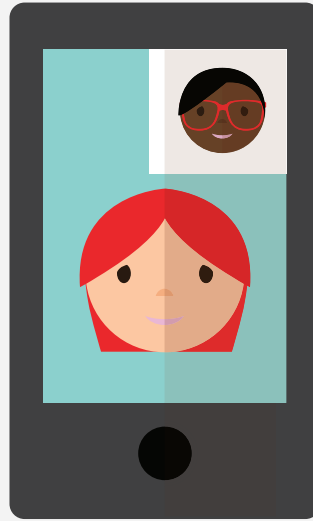
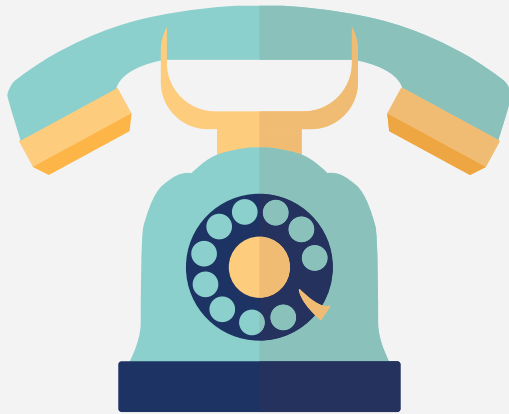
1. Take a moment to draw what you think your three Spheres of Influence look like right now—which is bigger and which is smaller?

**See example below:**



2. Then, ask yourself, is this where my Spheres of Influence need to be for the stage of life I am in right now? Is there one that's being neglected? Or one that is dominating too much space? How might you need to change your Spheres to create more balance and a larger sense of control?

The idea is to understand where your Spheres of Influence need to be in your particular stage of life to support you. As your responsibilities grow in each of these spheres, maintaining a healthy balance is the crucial ingredient to creating success and preserving your sanity.



**DO YOU FOCUS ON...**  
*The past? The present? The future?*

# The truth is, we don't actually see the world as it is, but as we are.

**What this means is, our experience of events is always a reflection and outcome of our emotions and feeling state.**

The Meaning you assign to everything in your life defines your life. The words you commonly use to describe your present, past and future constantly create and reinforce the reality you live in. If you portray yourself as a helpless victim, a habitual loser, or even just as unlucky, you'll be just that. Your Focus will direct you toward situations and choices that will make this Meaning true — and you will take action and make decisions to ensure only negative things happen!

However, if you cast yourself as the powerful master of your destiny, you'll become that too. Although we can't change or rewrite our personal biographies, we can rewrite the stories we tell ourselves and greatly expand what's possible and likely for our futures.

To achieve anything, you first think of the future, you must envision it, you must plan it, and then you must go after it. To enjoy things, you have to come to this moment – the present. The past is just a collection experiences to learn from, and perhaps, sometimes, you will enjoy fond memories and recollections.



# The Truth:

## Be honest with yourself – where is your focus?

Learn the key characteristics of people with each of the following focuses: <sup>4</sup>

### Future-Focused People



- Future-focused people are driven by goals.
- They make decisions based on the anticipation of future consequences using if-then reasoning. They are not prone to taking risks.
- They are able to avoid temptations and distractions that are perceived as short-term fulfillment or time wasting.
- The future-oriented person is unable to enjoy present, transient, leisurely activities and experiences.

### Present-Focused People



- Seek immediate gratification while ignoring or minimizing the abstract qualities that exist in an anticipated future context or a remembered past context.
- They give in easily to temptation.
- They enjoy all things that bring immediate pleasure and avoid things that involve much effort, work, planning, or unpleasantness.
- They tend to be narrowly focused on what is rather than what might be, or used to be.
- Present-focused people tend to be more self-indulgent and playful.

### Past-Focused People



- They are able to distance themselves from the reality of the immediate and instead focus on their obligations.
- These people tend to be conservative and concerned over maintaining the status quo, whether it is really good or bad for them.
- They are not impressed by new, different, more efficient ways of doing things – they are suspicious of and fear them.
- Rituals and myths play important roles in their lives as do traditional or fundamental values.
- They do not take risks and are not adventurous.

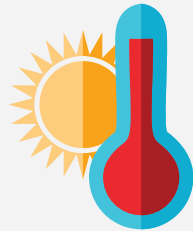
# Understand the seasons of life

No matter what lens (past, present or future) you view life through it is important to recognize the natural ebbs and flows of life. When experiencing a high or a low, just remember that nothing is permanent – because winter or spring or summer or fall is just right around the corner. By learning the seasons of life, you can prepare for and gauge where you are at present as well as anticipate where you're likely headed in the future. It is important to note that these personal seasons do not have to correlate to the physical seasons, it's more about what time of your life they symbolize.



## Spring

Things are born and they begin to grow.



## Summer

Things continue to grow and mature.



## Fall

Things reach their peak and begin to transform and slowly fall.



## Winter

Things begin to sleep or pass on. Their passing makes the next spring possible.

Understanding the seasons is the first step, but the key is in the application. What happens if you plant seeds in the winter? You don't reap the benefits. The principle is simple – you must do the right thing at the right time. If you do the wrong thing at the wrong time you will not be rewarded. Master this and you will learn to thrive in any season.

# FOCUS on creating a life you deserve and desire

Quality questions create a quality life. They direct our mental focus and therefore determine how we think and feel. The key is to develop a pattern of questions that empower you.

The following questions are designed to help direct you focus and help you experience more happiness, excitement, pride, gratitude, joy, commitment and love every day of your life.

- 1. What am I most happy about in my life now?** What about that makes me happy? How does that make me feel?
- 2. What am I most excited about in my life now?** What about that makes me excited? How does that make me feel?
- 3. What am I most proud about in my life now?** What about that makes me proud? How does that make me feel?
- 4. What am I most grateful about in my life now?** What about that makes me grateful? How does that make me feel?
- 5. What am I enjoying most in my life right now?** What about that do I enjoy? How does that make me feel?
- 6. What am I committed to in my life right now?** What about that makes me committed? How does that make me feel?
- 7. Who do I love? Who loves me?** What about that makes me loving? How does that make me feel?

**If you really want to create a shift in your life, make this a part of your daily ritual. By consistently asking these questions, you'll find that you access your most empowering emotional states on a regular basis, and you'll begin to create mental highways to happiness, excitement, pride, gratitude, joy, commitment and love.**



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