

Circles of influence

Step 1:

Write down all possible concerns that you have in life. Things you worry about when you wander off in your thoughts, things that keep you up at night, things that worry you at work. Write down your irrational and rational fears, and write down the people who it concerns.

Step 2:

Start filling your external circle. Maybe use paint or tools such as Miro to prevent paper loss ;). The external circle is things you cannot influence at all. Remember things like earthquakes, political decisions, and your irrational fears. This is your circle of concerns.

Step 3:

Start writing down the things that you can influence. This should be everything except your thoughts, words, and actions, those are under your control. This circle includes the opinions of others, voting, where I work, and whether I get a promotion or not.

Step 4:

Now write down the thoughts, words, and actions from yourself that you are concerned with. You can write them down in choices or attitudes if you want to.

Step 5:

Start making connections for yourself across the 3 circles. For example, you may have written down a fear of a terrible disease like cancer. While getting cancer or not is completely out of your control and thus belongs to the external circle, there are things that we can control within our thoughts and actions. Staying both physically and mentally healthy for example by working out, and taking action on personal development. To some degree, we can even state that the overall mental and physical health is something we influence through these actions rather than control.

Step 6:

1. Prepare to mentally refocus yourself when you are busy with your external circle. Try to control your thoughts. This is very simply said but indeed it means when you notice yourself thinking about these things try to redirect your thoughts to something you have control over;
2. When you are working with your circle of influence, focus on what you can do (circle of control) to influence this circle. Don't think about how the things in this circle annoy you, but make a plan for yourself to make them a positive event;

3. When you are working with your circle of control, make a plan for yourself on how to turn around your negative thoughts to positive ones, and how to reinforce your positive thoughts and actions.
4. Plan a reflective moment for yourself at set intervals. This can be daily for 5 minutes for example. Reviewing where you are busy with in your head, will help you the next day to see your patterns of thought sooner and maybe change them in the moment.

Step 7:

Be happy that you did this exercise and be proud of yourself for making such a step. It doesn't have to be perfect and you can revise it over time. Be content with what you have done so far and keep moving forward :) If you find it difficult find a suitable coach who can help you with this.

