



CULTIVATING THE SEEDS OF CHANGE ©
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Influential People

Each of us has been fortunate enough to have had someone in our lives have a positive affect on us. Some of us remember a teacher that made a difference at a critical time. Some had parents, grandparents or other relatives to lean on. For others, it may have been a rabbi or pastor. We had the fortunate experience of someone supporting us in just the right way at just the right time.

As fortunate as we have been to have had at least one person to influence us in our lives, I wonder what influence we have had on other people. Are we conscious of how we relate to others and what affect our interactions have had on the other person? Or is most of our focus on how the other person is affecting us?

You don't have to be a "person of influence" to be influential. In fact, the most influential people in my life are probably not even aware of the things they've taught me." Scott Adams, American Cartoonist

Have you ever wondered why people react to you in a less than favorable way? Your awareness of their behavior towards you is a possible clue about what influence you may have on those other people. Take children, for instance; they are usually a good indicator of how things affect them. Picture children in a grocery store at meal time with a stressed out parent rushing them through the aisles. THEY get cranky and stressed out. They start bothering a brother or sister. Or they may start pulling things off the nearby shelves. The more irritated the parent becomes, the more wound up the child becomes. This ends in the child crying, the parent yelling and possibly other shoppers scurrying for cover. Worse yet, if you are the one behind this frazzled group at the register, you may carry some of their stress home with YOU.

Influence, defined by Webster as "a power indirectly or intangibly affecting a person or course of action...an effect or a change produced by such power", is either positive or negative. Our actions determine what type of influence we have on other people.

It is my hope that we become more aware of the influence we have on those around us. If we want the Generation Y children to show respect, appreciation and courtesy, we have to influence their behaviors as often as we can by making sure our interactions are as positive and supportive as they can be.

"We all take different paths in life, but no matter where we go, we take a little of each other everywhere."

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GARDENER'S ACTION PLAN FOR OCTOBER 2005 ©

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Gandhi said, “*We have to be the change we seek in the world*”. This means we need to act in a way that will influence others to behave differently—at least around us. In his book, [The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#), Stephen Covey talks about the Circles of Concern and of Influence. The Circle of Concern is where negative minded people concentrate their energy: the issues they are concerned about most are those they have no control over. The Circle of Influence is the area in which proactive people expend the most energy; they concentrate on changing things they can do something about.

When we operate from the Circle of Concern, we become consumed by situations and circumstances around us that we have no control over. Our thoughts and actions reflect the negative energy with which we surround ourselves. Think back to the last time someone else was driving in rush hour traffic and allowed their frustrations to leak over into their behavior: cursing, weaving in and out of traffic, following too close to prevent their young child in the back seat from harm should conditions change quickly. If you show mild concern, they are quick to defend, blame and justify their actions. Many times, it only takes one grumbler to start a chorus of grumbles.

In the Circle of Influence, we see problems as involving our own behavior, other’s behavior or problems we can do nothing about. We can choose to change our own behavior or habits, change how we deal with others’ behavior using *methods of influence*, or simply accept that problems exist that we cannot do anything about (like changing your past). We choose to be proactive and influence our circumstances by adjusting our habits. We accept others for whom they are and adjust our response to them. We accept that there are things that we can never change, and accept that they will exist in spite of us.

Choosing to be proactive is choosing to operate from your value system. If you value understanding, you will proactively seek to understand. You will gain insight by asking questions until you are clear about what was said, what is required, what needs someone has. You will create a comfortable place from which they can ask for help or accept guidance. You will avoid placing blame and showing anger. The focus will be on gaining insight from the interaction, not on proving someone right or wrong.

I consider myself among the fortunate people; the ones that had a positive influence at some point in their lives to guide and support them. I believe everyone should have that experience at least once in their lives.

I am a gardener. I plant seeds of hope, understanding, friendship and possibility. I believe you reap what you sow.

**I am a dreamer. I create opportunities for people to find their inner core.
I help them grow their dreams.**

If you are ready to change your habits and be a more positive influence and would like support, you may request a 30-minute complimentary coaching session by sending an email to Renee@landofpossibility.com or by calling (301) 279-2363. All rights reserved. This may be reproduced with copyright statement and credits intact.



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