

Habit #1: Be Proactive

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Our perception of ourselves is often just a reflection of the views and opinions of everyone around us. Thus, who we are is determined by others. There are three theories of determinism that have been used to describe what shapes a person.

1. Genetic determinism - DNA and heritage
2. Psychic determinism - Upbringing and beliefs
3. Environmental determinism - Environment (your friends, work, neighborhood, etc.)

All three of these theories are based on a stimulus and response. Something happens to us, therefore we respond in a certain way, shaping our character. However, this subconscious response to external factors can be avoided. Being proactive does not only refer to talking initiative, as it is often used, but also to taking responsibility of your actions.

An important step in becoming more proactive is to identify your "Circle of Concern" and "Circle of Influence." items in your Circle of Concern include anything that might concern you, ranging from personal influences to national issues. Items in your Circle of Influence include everything that you have control over. Proactive people will focus on expanding their Circle of Influence, while reactive people will focus their efforts in their Circle of Concern, thus reducing their Circle of Influence. Your Circle of Concern should be at least as big as your Circle of Influence. If your Circle of Concern becomes smaller than your Circle of Influence, which is generally associated with those with large amounts of wealth and power, this reflects a reactive selfish life-style focused within your Circle of Concern.