# Advocating For Your Volunteer Programme

Included in this workbook are a few exercises that can help you better advocate and influence for your volunteer programme - and yourself!

## Stakeholder identification

Who are the people who can help you when you're advocating for your volunteer programme?

When advocating for your volunteer program, it is important to think about the goal you want to achieve, so that you can identify the key stakeholders who can help you.

To do this:

1. List all possible internal and external stakeholders - staff, trustees, volunteers, etc.

2. Draw a two-by-two box, or use the one overleaf.

3. Assess each stakeholder's level of influence and power over organisational decision making as high or low.

    a. Not sure about their power or influence? Make an educated guess.

4. Map out their names based on their influence and power levels, using the grid.

5. Note who you have good existing relationships with.

6. Note who you need to develop relationships with.

7. Note who could help you develop these relationships as they are connected to the most influential and powerful.

As you do this exercise, think about:

- Who controls the resources?

- Who has financial stake or interest?

- Who has the most influence in this organisation / department?

- Who has the trust of these people?

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- Who will be most impacted?
- Who might be an important person but not a central stakeholder (e.g. someone in a different department, volunteers, trustees)?

## Who are your stakeholders?

In the box below, add your stakeholder names, focusing on those you regularly work with. Note those with low power/influence stakeholders for the overall map, though they may not be important now (e.g., your team, those you manage), they could be in the future.

Once completed, you can also use this to plan project stakeholder communication and engagement.

| **High Power / Low Influence** | **High Power / High Influence** |
|---|---|
| *Keep satisfied* | *Manage closely* |
| **Low Power / Low Influence** | **Low Power / High Influence** |
| *Monitor* | *Keep informed* |

# Who's in your network?

If you're finding the stakeholder grid difficult, you may want to start with another exercise. This exercise helps you identify your own network within your organisation, starting with those you're closest to, and working outwards.

- Get a piece of paper

- Draw a small circle in the middle, with your name inside it

- Add a circle around it: this is your inner circle.

- Add another circle: this is your friendly circle, the people you know well and might be friendly with at work.

- Add a final circle: this is your outer circle, the people who are important to you and provide a function, but you don't know them that well.
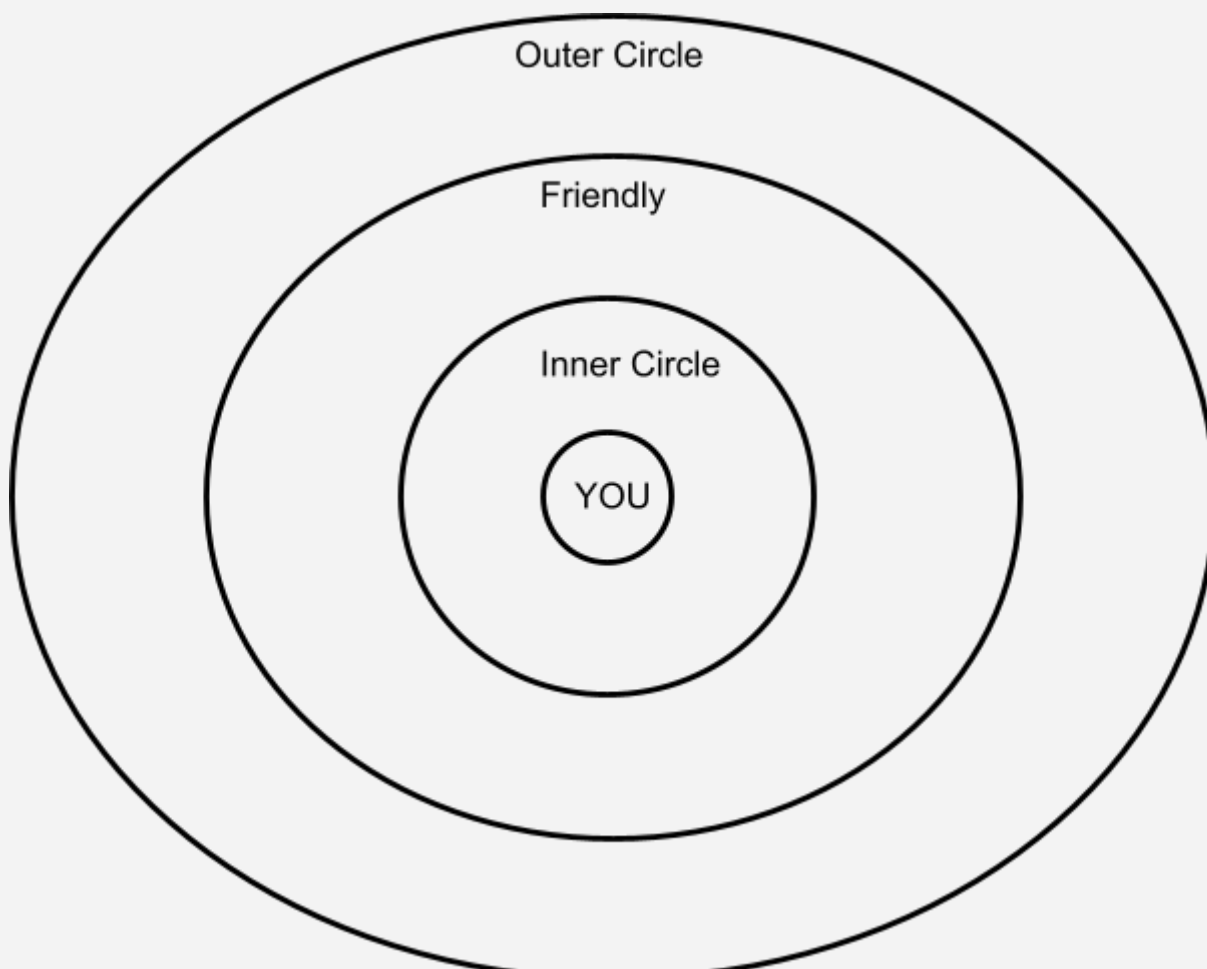
# Communicating at Your Best

We all need certain things to communicate at our best. This includes things like our environment, what's going on around us, what's happening elsewhere in our lives.

Using the table below - or drawing your own - start to think about what helps you communicate at your best.

This is based on the The NLP 'Logical Levels' Model.

| Environment | Behaviour | Skills | Beliefs and Values | Identity and Purpose |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *What environment supports you to communicate at your best?* | *What behaviours support you to communicate at your best?* | *What are you already good at that supports you to communicate at your best?* | *What do you believe and value that helps you communicate at your best?* | *Who do you want to be that enables you to communicate at your best?* |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Here are some examples for each of the levels:

1. Environment

   - Having a quiet, distraction-free environment
   - Being in a professional setting that requires clear communication.

2. Behaviour:

   - Speaking clearly and at an appropriate volume.
   - Making eye contact and using body language effectively.
   - Actively listening and responding appropriately.

3. Skills:

   - Having strong verbal and nonverbal communication skills, in order to express thoughts and ideas coherently.
   - Preparing well for communications.
   - Being a good, active listener.

4. Beliefs and Values:

   - Believing that clear and respectful communication is important.
   - Valuing honesty, openness, and understanding in communication.
   - Having a belief in that preparation is important to good communication.

5. Identity and Purpose:

   - Seeing oneself as an effective volunteer manager who can communicate well.
   - Having confidence in one's ability to communicate well.
   - Viewing communication as a means to connect with and understand others on a deeper level.

# Communication preferences

Communication preferences can be understood based on whether someone is extraverted or introverted, and people-oriented or task-oriented. This can be assessed using frameworks like DISC or Myers-Briggs.

## D = Dominance

Those with Dominance as their strongest preference tend to be extraverted and task-oriented, focused on results and the big picture. They're often confident, blunt, outspoken, and demanding. They may prefer in-person communication with top-level details and no preamble, and may share thoughts immediately and off-the-cuff.

## I = Influence

Those with Influence as their strongest preference tend to be extraverted and people-oriented, placing emphasis on influencing or persuading others. They tend to be enthusiastic, optimistic, open, trusting, and energetic. They may prefer in-person interactions, valuing relationships and getting things done, and may need time for rapport-building before getting down to the task.

## S = Steadiness

Those with Steadiness as their strongest preference tend to be introverted and people-oriented. They place value on cooperation, sincerity, loyalty, and dependability. They tend to be calm and deliberate, and dislike being rushed. They may prefer written communication to process before making decisions, and need rapport-building before getting down to business.
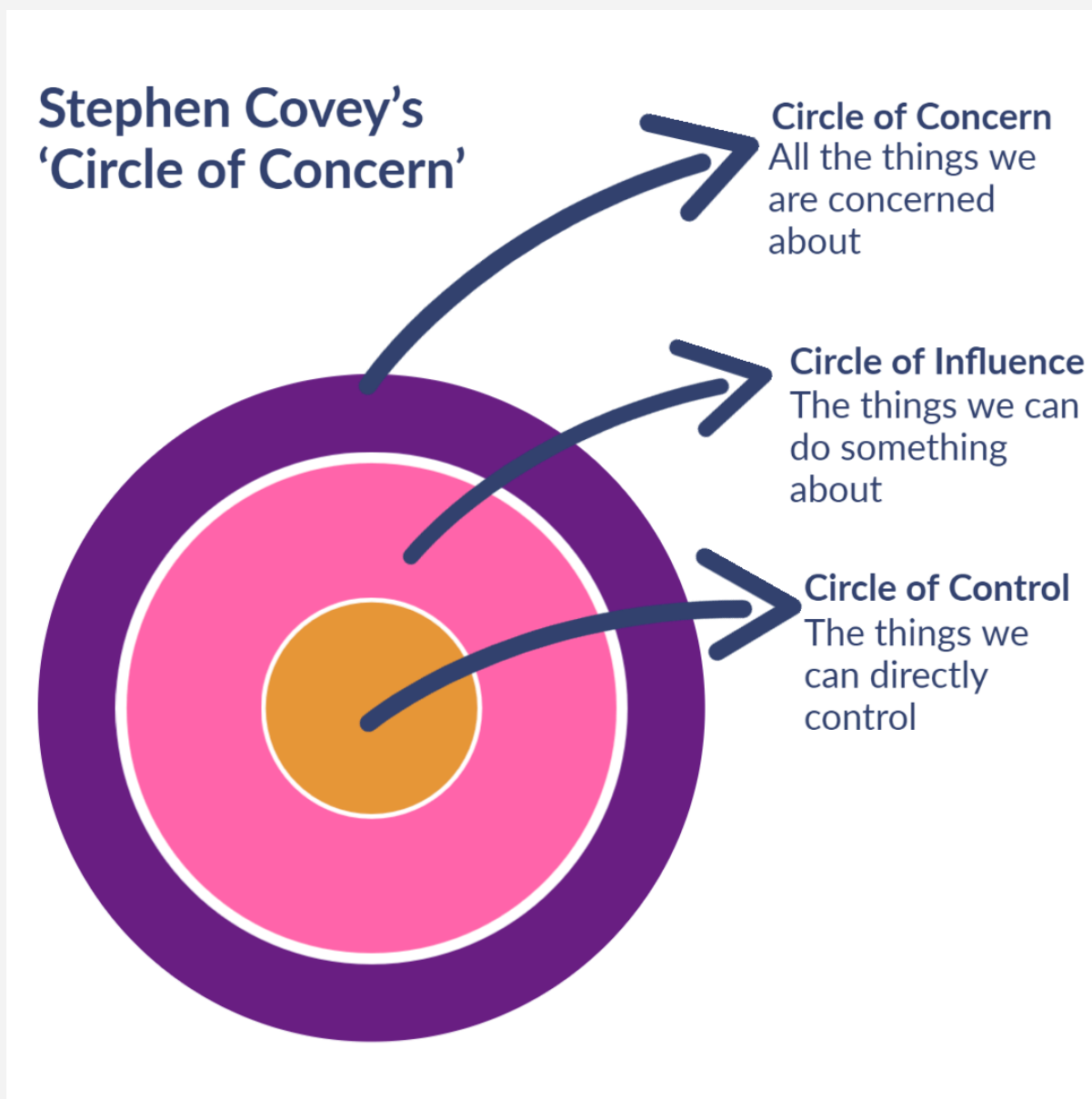
## C = Conscientiousness

Those with Conscientiousness as their strongest preference tend to be introverted and task-oriented, focused on quality, accuracy, expertise, and competency. They tend to be independent, highly detail-oriented, and fear being wrong. They may prefer written information in advance to process, or written follow-up after verbal communication.

# Reflection questions

- Thinking about yourself: what are your preferences when giving and receiving information?

- Thinking about your manager or someone you want to influence: what are their preferences when it comes to giving and receiving information?

- Thinking about your situation: how might you need to adapt your communication style in order to better advocate to those of a different preference?

# Circles of Concern

We do not have control or influence over everything we are concerned about. It is therefore important to know what we can influence and control. When we know this, it becomes easier to set goals and take action… and to worry less about the things we can't control.



Stephen Covey's 'Circle of Concern'

**Circle of Concern**
All the things we are concerned about

**Circle of Influence**
The things we can do something about

**Circle of Control**
The things we can directly control

# Using the Circles of Concern

For a situation where you want to influence or advocate:

- List all your concerns about the situation.

- Create two columns on a separate piece of paper:

  - 'Things I can Control'

  - 'Things I can Influence'.

- For each concern, if you decide it is controllable or you can have influence, write it in the respective column and cross it off your list.

You'll now have a list of controllable and influenceable items to plan advocating for your volunteer program.

For the things you cannot control or influence, you need to decide how you will manage them (which is in itself an element of control!)
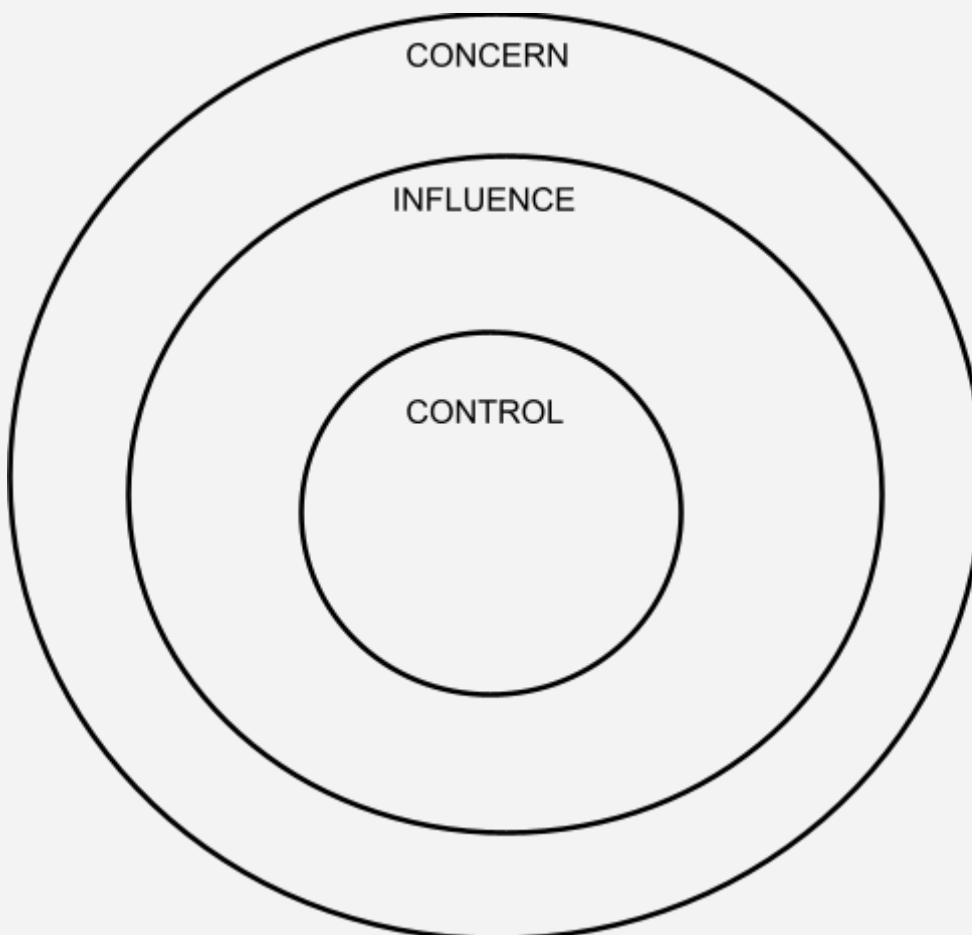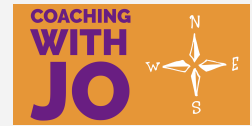
# About Jo

Do you think a successful life might look different for you? That there might be a different way for you, for your life and your career? Do you want to avoid hustle and burnout, and thrive in your life, saying yes to more of your love, while steering clear of burnout?

If you want to take control of your life and work, and set better boundaries before you end up suffering from burnout, let's connect!

Because burnout sucks!


I'm Jo, a Life-Work Balance Coach, who helps charity workers find their life-work blend, set boundaries, and steer clear of burnout, building good habits. I help them find a 'you-shaped' version of happy and successful, and support them to say yes to more of what they love, and steer clear of burnout

I was Head of Business Development for the UK's Association of Volunteer Managers (AVM) for three years, and previously a Director of AVM for two years, as well as working in volunteer management roles as national UK organisations for eight years.


# Let's connect

LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/jogibney/

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/coachingwithjo/

Book a free call to find out how I can help you or your organisation through coaching and/or action learning sets: https://tidycal.com/jogibney