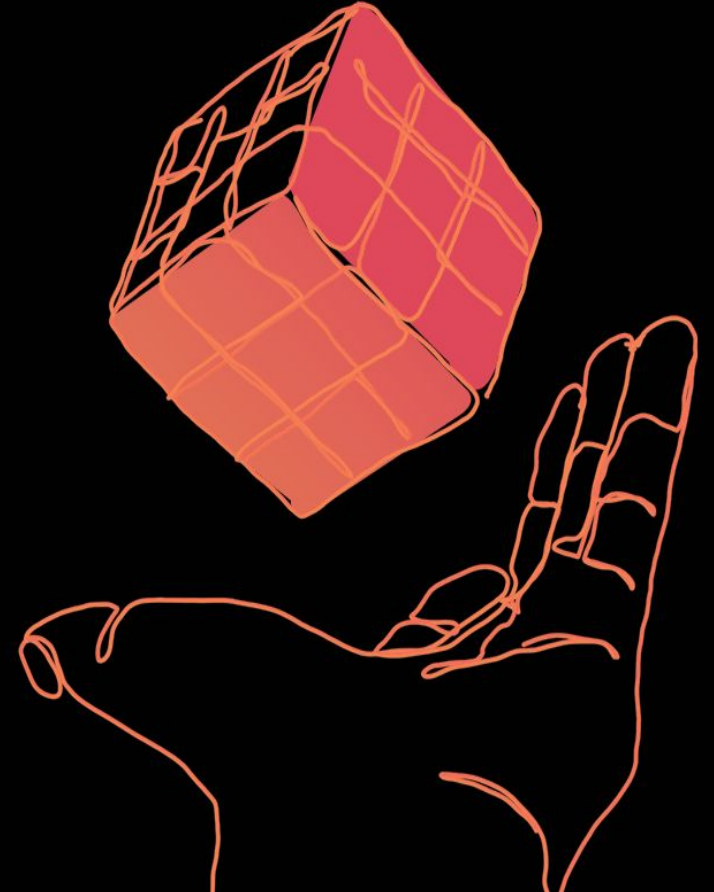


TECHBBQ x today

MANAGING YOUR EMOTIONS



Managing Your Emotions

- Fear, overwhelming worries, and doubts are **normal reactions** to the ups and downs founders face in the process of building a start-up.
- It is important to understand that the healthy way of looking at these feelings is **not to block them out**; instead, we must address them by **finding sustainable ways to cope with them.**

A note before we continue...

- All tools suggested below stem from psychotherapy practices, research-backed psychological theories, and established ideas about the human mind.
- To support founders new to mental health care, the tools have been simplified.
- Please note that these tools **cannot and should not be used as a replacement for professional mental health services** when they are needed.

Managing your worries

- Psychologist Adrian Wells generated the concept of **Metacognitive Therapy (MCT)**, which posits that the **psyche is self-regulated**, in the same way that a physical wound will heal itself.
- From this perspective, we **might not be able to control** our thoughts or emotions all the time, but we can train **how much attention** we use on them.
- A good analogy for the metacognitive perspective on worry is that worries and concerns are a passing train. **You can choose to jump on** and let them take you for a ride— **or you can stay on the ground**.

Set a worrying time

- This is a metacognitive technique where you do all your worrying at a specific time that is best suited for you, like half an hour before or after work each day.
- If a worrying thought or emotion comes outside of your worrying time, **accept the feelings and say** “Hey, worries— it’s fine that you are here now, but **I won’t focus on you outside of my worry time.**”

Set a worrying time, continued

- It's important that you **do not run away** from your thoughts or emotions; instead, let them be and then focus your attention on something else.
- If the worrying thoughts return, **do not blame yourself**. Simply acknowledge their presence, and refocus your attention on the task at hand.
- It will be difficult at first, but as with any skill, **you will improve with practice**.

Labelling Emotions

- Studies show emotions can be much more manageable when given **names and labels**.
 - In other words, just saying **“I’m feeling so angry right now!”** can actually **make you feel less angry**.
- This works for positive emotions too! Putting a positive emotion into words increases its impact and **makes you feel more positive**.
- The next time you experience overwhelming emotions – good or bad – try to verbalise your feelings and **observe how your emotional state changes**.

Daily emotional check-in

- Labelling intense emotions as they emerge requires practice. The daily emotional check-in tool can help to train this skill.
- Once per day, such as in the morning, at lunchtime or in the evening, verbalise your emotions to yourself:
 - Ask yourself: **“How do I feel right now?”** or **“How do I know I feel this way?”**
 - Respond: **“I feel...”** or **“There is a part of me that feels...”**
 - Elaborate to yourself: I sense this in my body because...
“there’s a warm feeling in my chest,” or **“I have a hollow feeling in my stomach.”**

Balance responsibility and control

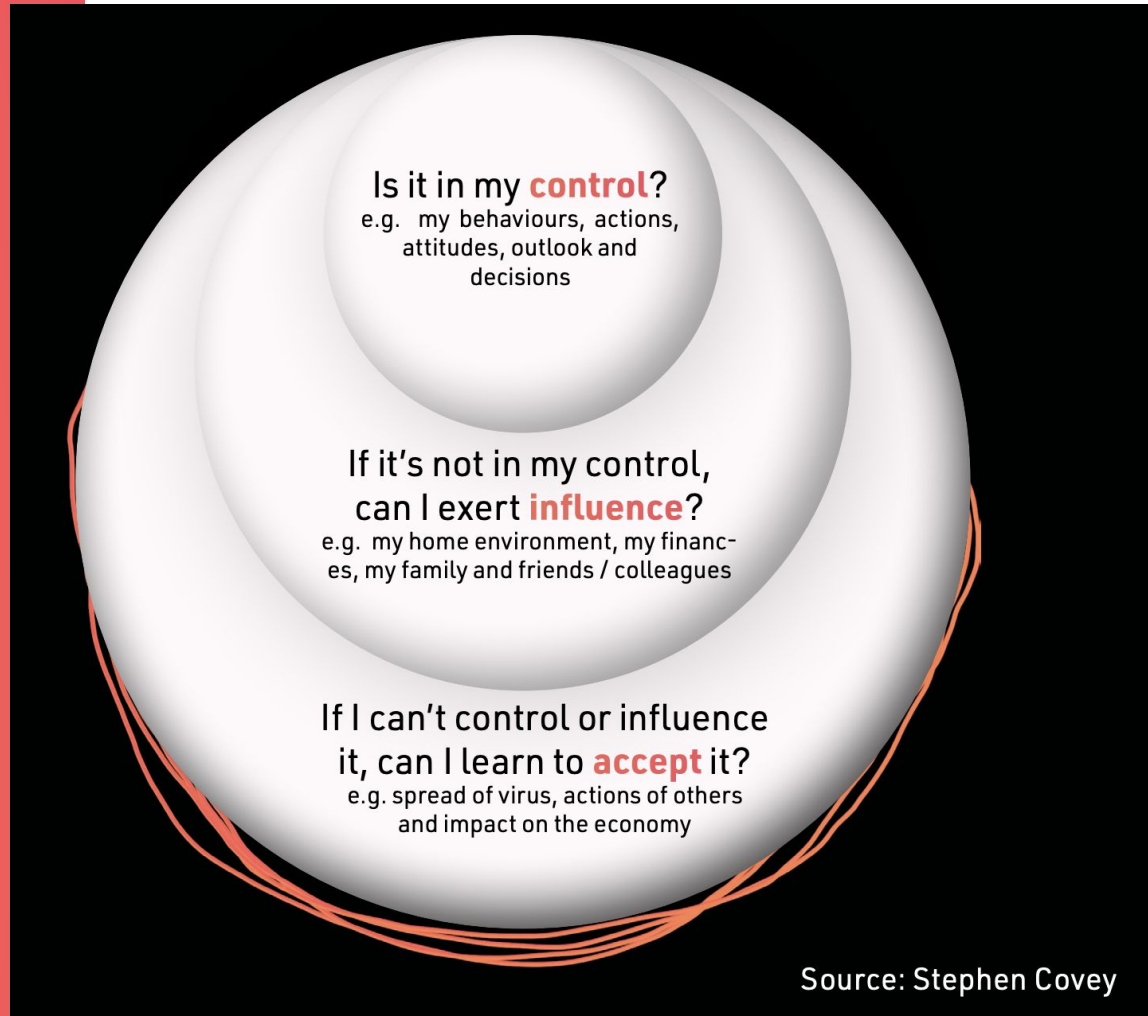
- Founders often feel absolute responsibility for their companies, while in reality, **they do not have full control** over how everything goes.
- The board and the investors have some control, and so do external factors like finding a product market fit, the launch of a new product, and so on.
- Worrying about things outside of your control and influence is unproductive, and often causes anxiety and stress.

Circle of influence and control

- Use the tool on the next page to map out your **worries, problems, and challenges** into separate categories based on whether and/or how you can influence them.
- By rationally judging the level of influence and control you have over a given issue, you can more effectively invest **time, energy and emotions** into dealing with the issues that **you can actually affect**.

Separate your thoughts into the following three categories:

1. Those that are in your **direct control**;
2. Those that you can't control, but **you can influence**;
3. Those that are neither within your control nor under your influence.



Accepting your thoughts

- Another method of coping with worries is acceptance and commitment therapy, which focuses on **accepting your thoughts** for what they are: **stories we tell ourselves**.
- This tool teaches us to see these thoughts **not through the lens of right and wrong**, but instead asking if the thoughts are **helping you build the life you want**.
- Defusion techniques like this can help us to defuse (separate) ourselves from the **thoughts and beliefs that are not helpful to us**.

Thank your consciousness

- Every time your consciousness surfaces a negative narrative like “I’m not good enough,” or “I will eventually fail,” you simply say “**thank you**” to your consciousness.
 - For example, you can say to yourself: “Thank you consciousness, that’s nice to know,” or “Thanks for that information.”
- **Don’t be sarcastic or aggressive**— do it with **warmth, good humor, and appreciation** that your consciousness is producing all these stories for you.

Remember to take it slow!

- Don't change everything all at once— it's just not sustainable.
- Make making small changes gradually, **just like you would make minimal viable changes to your product.**
- Pick one tool at a time and focus on it for 30 days. Then, you can evaluate and reflect on whether that practice has resulted in any noticeable changes.

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