An Introduction to Anchoring: The Circle of Excellence

Learn how to create a resourceful state at any time or place

Colita Dainton

www.Litabix.com

The Circle of Excellence or Circle of Confidence

The 'Circle of Excellence' is an NLP Anchoring tool to enable you to get yourself into the 'right state' for any particular scenario – e.g. feeling confident before presenting, calm before a job interview, focused before you take a shot (the list of potential uses is endless). So often individuals underachieve as a result of not being in the right state – we all the resources we need, however it's possible we're unaware of the them, or haven't considered how transferable some of the resources are from completely unrelated areas of their lives to another. Sometimes people simply don't know how to access those positive emotional states or resources at the point at which they require to use them.

Using the process outlined here, you can make your preparation for any event even more effective, by adding the Circle of Excellence to your preparations.

The following five tips outline the 'Circle of Excellence' technique, which will enable you to access the right state, at the right time, in the right place.

1. Know how you want to feel

This might sound a very obvious place to start and it is an important stage to consider. By identifying how you wish to feel, it means that you can break down those desired states and access them one by one from other life experiences.

Ask yourself: 'How do I want to feel in a particular situation, (e.g. confident, excited, focused, calm might be the feelings you would select for presenting).

If you are still unsure ask someone, who excels in what you want to do how they feel when they do the task well.

An example of a desired state might be*: 'I am just about to give a presentation to 500 people and I want to feel confident, calm and respected'*

2. Design a 'Circle' that works as your anchor

An anchor is a stimulus, which generates a particular state inside you. Although you can Anchor any of the modalities (e.g. visual, auditory, kinesthetic etc), the advantage of setting a 'Circle of Excellence' is that you can ensure it is always with you when you need it.

My suggestion as a starting point would be to draw an imaginary circle on the floor, which you step into when you wish to both 'set' and 'access' your anchored states.

You then use your powerful imagination, to shrink the circle down and it can be placed on a finger as an imaginary ring or a bangle on your wrist to transport around with you. The imaginary circle can be taken off and laid in front of you when you stand to present, sit in a meeting, stand on the putting green, or whatever the appropriate scenario is where you wish to use those resources. Nobody even needs to know.

3. Anchor your desired states - the crucial part of the technique!

Lay your circle (whatever shape, colour etc that works for you) in front of you and think of a time when you absolutely had the desired state (to continue our example, you might start with confidence). This can be confidence in ANY situation (not in a specific context such as presenting).

When did you have an experience when you felt really confident about something – can you think of that time? – good … then say to yourself (or have someone read to you):

"Can you remember a time a specific when you were totally X'ed? Can you remember a specific time? As you go back to that time now … go right back, flat down into your body and see what you saw and hear what you heard and really feel those feelings of being totally X'ed"

- As soon as you you start to feel that state reproduce itself inside you (and it will), step into your circle and remain there until you feel the feelings subside, then step out.
- Repeat this AT LEAST three times for each of the desired states linked with the activity you are preparing for.
- (N.B. This works even better if you think of a different time when you experienced that state for each of those three times).

If it is useful to add in other anchors, such as an auditory anchor, where you might say something specific to yourself as you step into the circle, or a visual anchor, where you see a particular image as you step into the circle, then add that in to further strengthen that anchoring process.

Tip: If you are doing this with someone else – make sure you use their own words back to them when you are talking through the questions. If they are anchoring confidence for example – ask them about a time they felt confident. Also make sure if more than one state is being anchored, that they are compatible and can exist simultaneously. In addition, make sure you are getting into state yourself – e.g. if they are anchoring confidence, make sure you feel confidence yourself and sound confident to help your client.

If you are unable to think of a time when you experienced the desired state, imagine what it would feel like, or what someone else would feel when they had that experience: this can work just as well as having had the experience yourself. Over time you can add even more strength to your anchor. When you successfully complete the presentation (or activity) and you felt confident, fluent and respected, just step into your circle and 'stack' that feeling so it will be even easier next time round to access that state. Whenever you finish with your circle, shrink it down and place it safely on your finger or wrist, so it is always there for you.

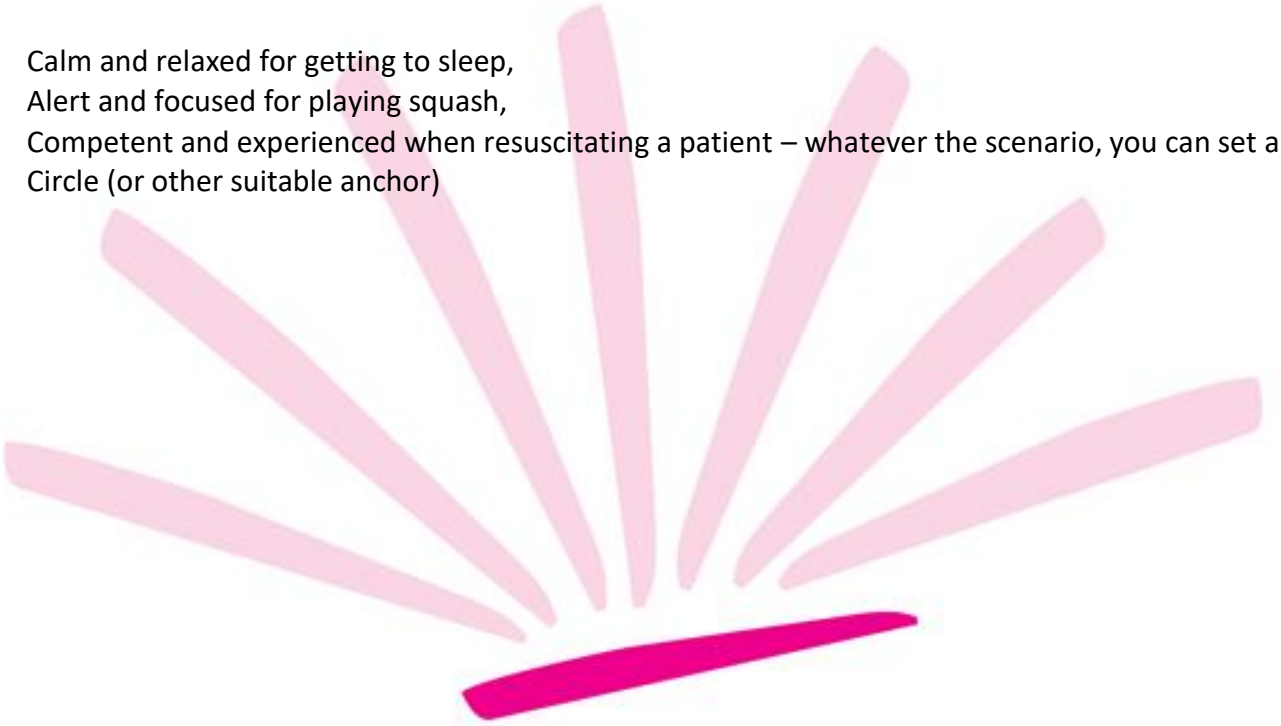
4. Test your anchor

Some people need to be convinced that tools and techniques work and one way of testing this is to go and do something else having set your anchor / Circle of Excellence. After a short period of time, just think about the task for which you were preparing and take your Circle off your finger and lay it before you and step into it – as if you were doing that task there and then and consider how you feel. You will find that you immediately feel those desired states. If you do not get the intensity of feeling you desired, repeat the process, paying as much attention as possible to the original states that you recalled – really connect with them emotionally and allow yourself to feel them, see how you looked, hear what you heard. Sometimes it takes a few more experiences to be stacked, before you feel the intensity of feeling you really desire.

5. Remember that your resource exists and use it

Now that you have an anchor or 'Circle of Excellence' in place, remember to use it.
This doesn't have to apply just to confidence, you can set different circles for different contexts.

- Calm and relaxed for getting to sleep,
- Alert and focused for playing squash,
- Competent and experienced when resuscitating a patient – whatever the scenario, you can set a Circle (or other suitable anchor)



For more great tips, motivation & techniques.
Join me on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram
@ Litabix