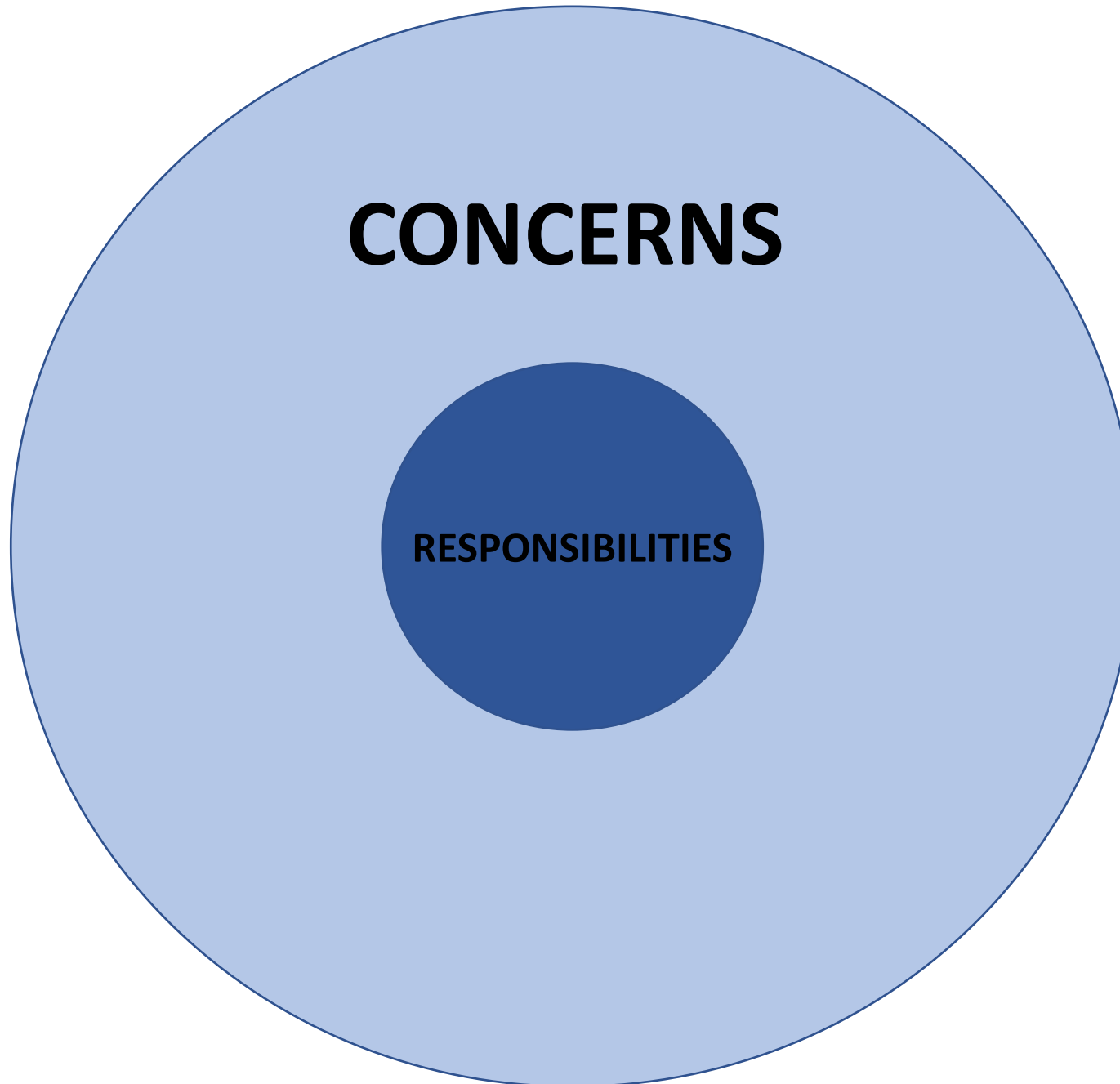


Think of your life comprised in 2 circles: there are things you care about and things for which you are actually responsible.

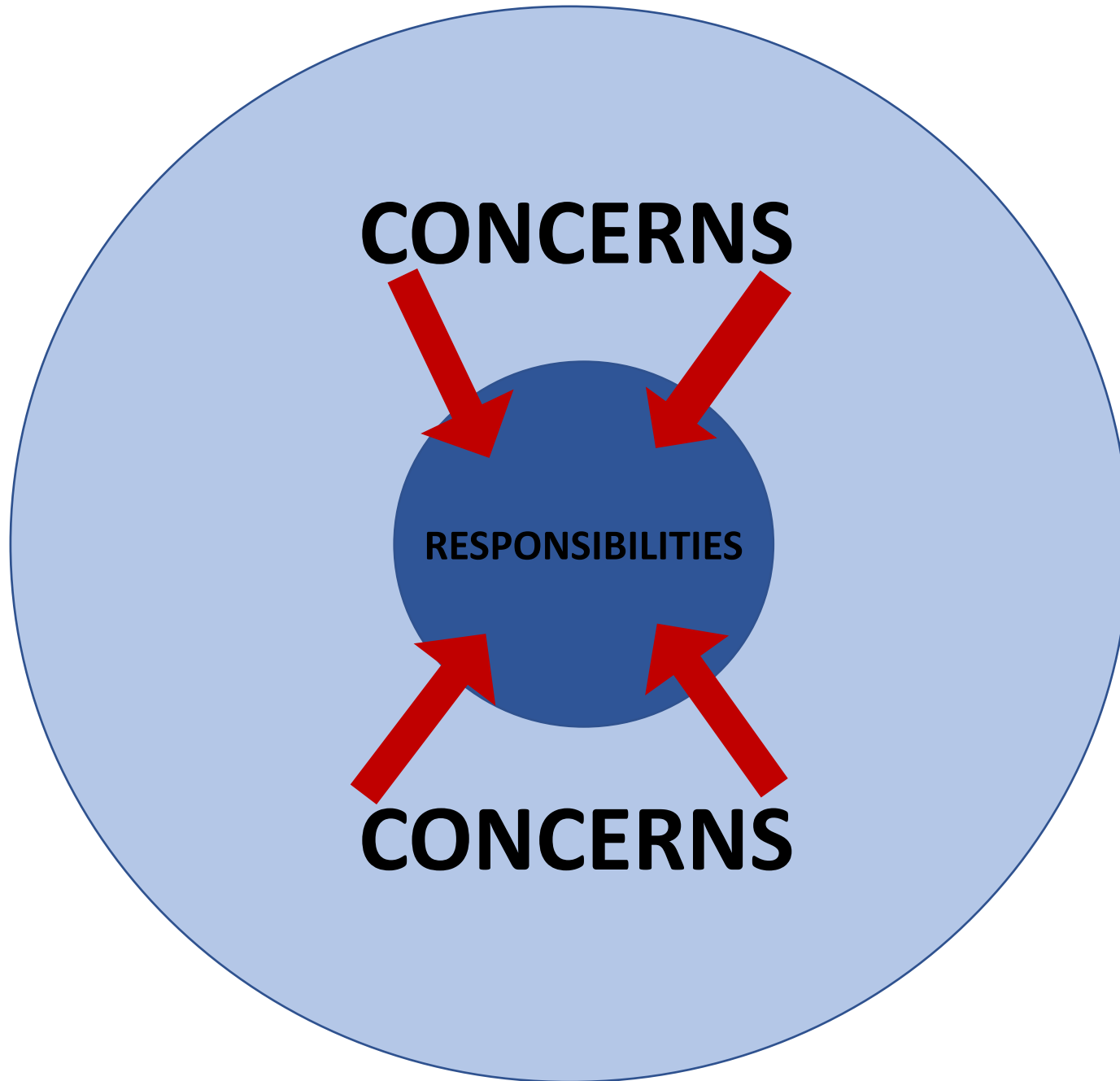
**Concerns:** People, places, and things you know about and care about but do not have direct control over, e.g. other people's words, actions, emotions, the economy, what my boss thinks, global impact of COVID, a friend's financial situation, etc.



**Responsibilities:** Things for which you are responsible and have direct control, e.g. your words, your reactions, showing up and giving your best, things listed on your job description, your diet and exercise, etc.

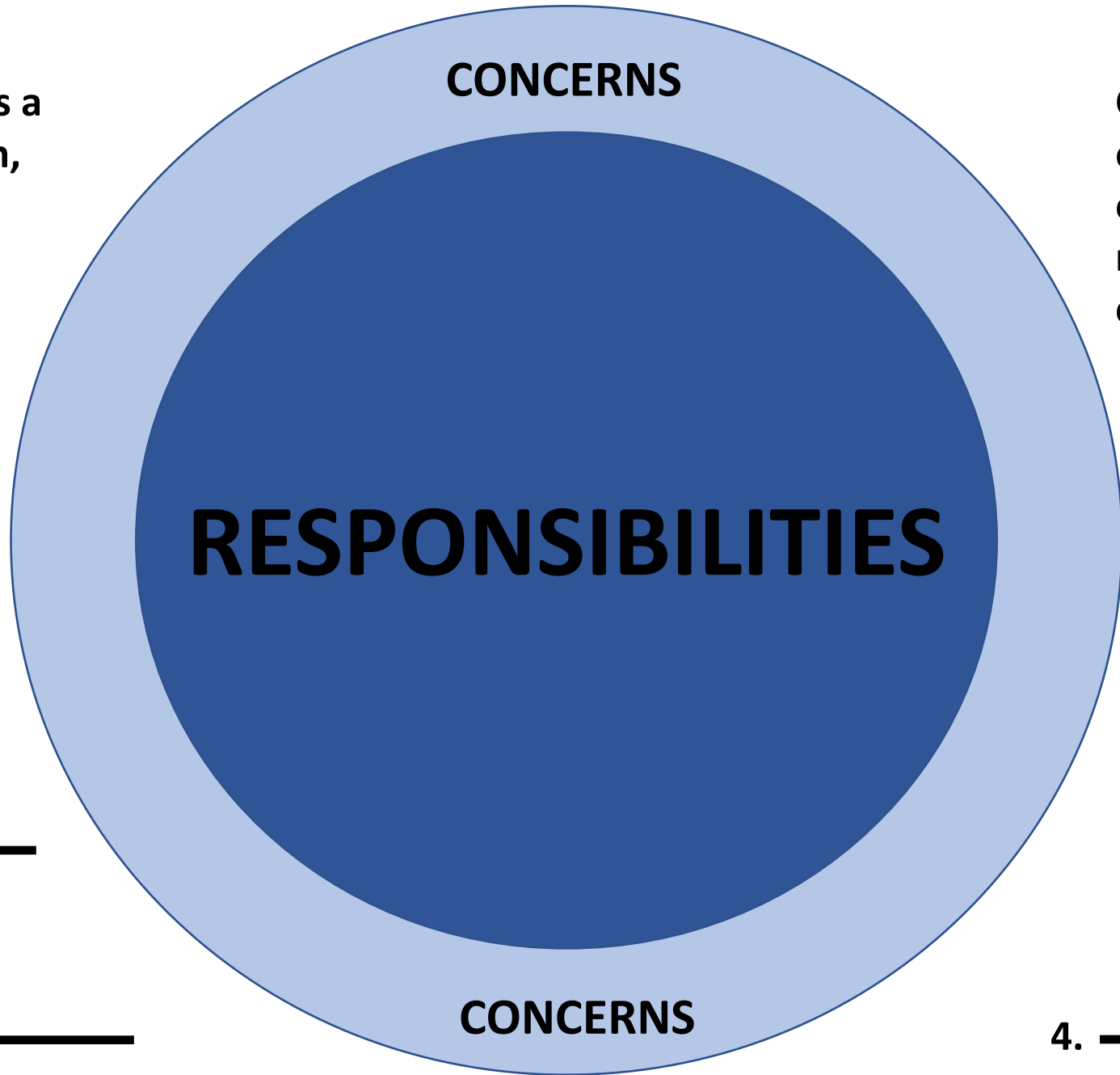
Big problems occur when we mix up these 2 circles. When you make yourself responsible for others' responsibilities, you strip them of their dignity and you add a large invisible weight onto your back which you will have to carry.

Stress, fatigue, anger exhaustion, and burnout occur when we internally and emotionally expand our responsibilities into the circle of concerns and when we pull concerns into the circle of responsibility, e.g. when I believe I have to be the glue that holds the family or business together, when I feel responsible for my wife's emotions or responses, when I tie my emotions to the actions of politicians. This is called over-functioning.



It is right to care about many things outside our control, but **caring is much different than bearing**. I certainly care about my wife's emotions, but when I take on the responsibility for them, I get anxious, try to anticipate her reaction, and manage her response. Counter-intuitively, she then feels less cared for, because she only needs me to be present with her in her emotions, not try to manage them. The responsibility circle is much smaller and thus much more manageable. What things are you truly responsible for and in control of and where are you bearing when you should be caring?

As you can see, this is a recipe for overwhelm, burnout, exhaustion, and stress.



Can you give at least 4 examples where you have expanded your circle of responsibility into your circle of concern?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_