

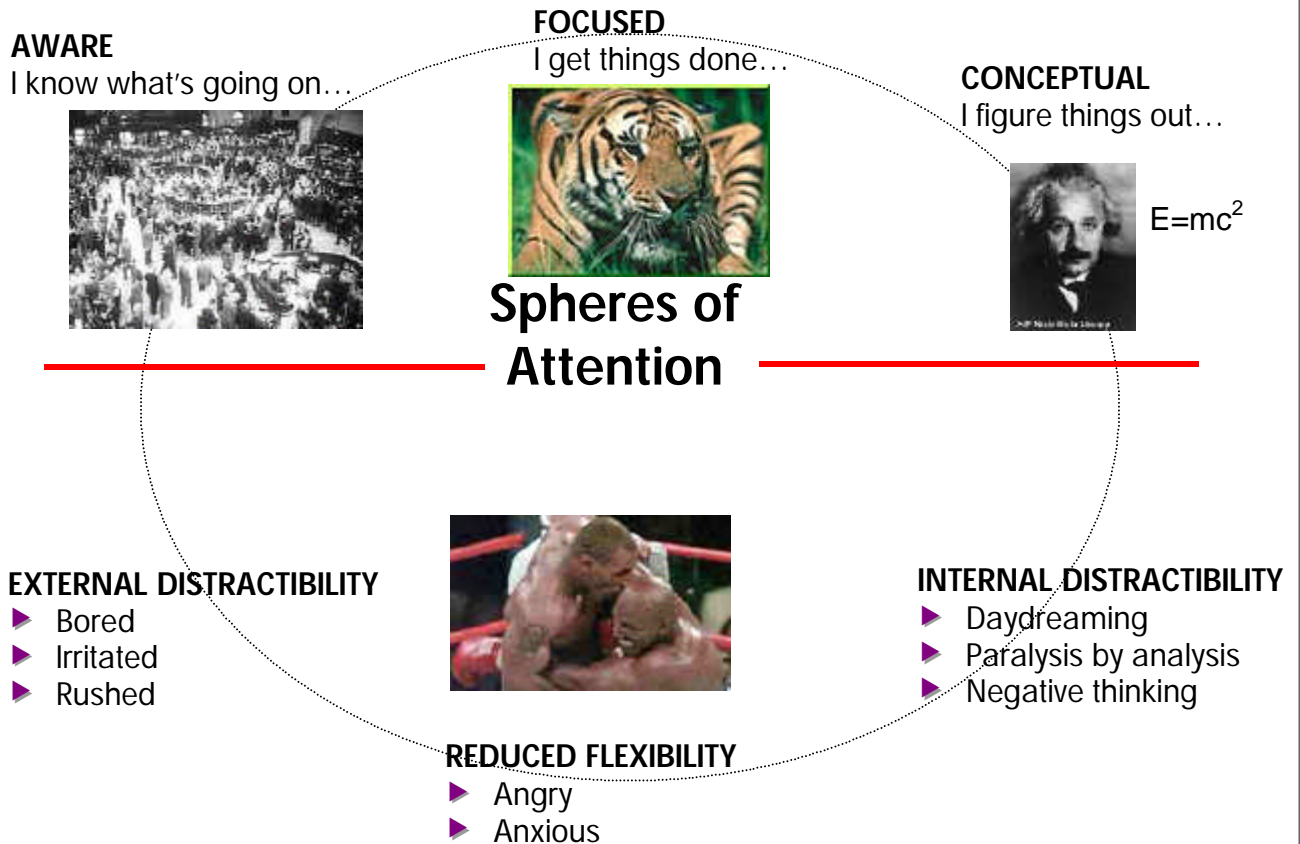
## The Spheres of Attention - Your Map to Enhanced Performance

"Pay attention!" "Concentrate!" "Listen!"

We strive to heed such advice from our teachers, parents, coaches, even ourselves.

We know intuitively that paying attention correctly is the key to all performance. But how? We want to be aware of our surroundings, and yet feel the need to zoom in to focus on details. Frequently, we must retreat inside our heads to figure out things, be conceptual. The reality is that no one can concentrate on everything at once so we have to choose which of these three distinct ways to pay attention we will use at any moment. Expertise becomes knowing what to pay attention to and what to ignore.

The Spheres of Attention figure depicts the three on-target styles (signal – above the line) and three corresponding ways we get off track (noise – below the line). Use it as your guide to your styles and ways to improve.



Everyone can use all three styles of paying attention and everyone gets distracted or stuck at least occasionally in the way depicted below the line. People differ in which style is their preferred style. Which is yours? Check the bar graphs on the next page. People also differ in how quickly they can change styles to meet challenging situations especially under pressure. The second member of each pair of bar graphs shows your tendency to get off-track and thus have difficulty switching from that style to another.

Knowing your relative attentional strength and weakness or limitation and your most likely way to lose your concentration or flexibility is the most important information you can have in your attempt to improve your performance.