

THE SKILLS YOU NEED

GUIDE TO PERSONAL AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS



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Skills You Need

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INTRODUCTION: A FLOW OF LEARNING AND SKILLS

From the moment we are born, we start to participate in personal relationships: with parents, with siblings, and with wider family and friends. As we grow, those relationships widen to include romantic relationships and eventually, perhaps, our own children, and an even wider family.

Many of the most sought-after interpersonal skills translate directly into personal and romantic relationships. However, it is surprising how hard it can be to apply learning from work or other situations to our personal relationships.

This book is designed to help you to do just that: to translate your learning about interpersonal skills and relationships from work or elsewhere into your personal life. We hope that it will help you to navigate personal and romantic relationships more easily, armed with the skills to communicate effectively with those you love.

BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS: THE FLOW OF LEARNING

Many of us probably start to understand the importance of interpersonal skills through work, or wider personal development. This is often because this is the first time that we are asked to consciously think about these skills.

That does not mean, however, that we have not already been learning interpersonal skills for many years.

Learning acquired through work can be applied at home, and this can make a huge improvement to our personal relationships—but skills and insights acquired through personal relationships can also be applied at work.

CASE STUDY HOME TO WORK

Sam had recently returned to work after a year's maternity leave. In discussion with a colleague one day, she realised something.

“Children—well, at least under the age of about eighteen months, I think—don't do things deliberately to annoy you,” she commented. “I mean, things go wrong, and they throw things about because they're cross, but I don't think they're doing it to make you cross. They're doing it because they're cross themselves.”

Her colleague agreed. Having older children, however, she pointed out that this might not continue for ever. Sam laughed, recognising the truth in that. She added, thoughtfully,

“I think it's helped me respond differently to people I manage, though. I used to get cross when things went wrong, because I thought they should be able to do better than that. Now I realise that everyone is basically doing their best, but things sometimes don't work out. It helps me to be a bit calmer when dealing with problems.”

Others had also noticed this. Sam was definitely more tolerant—and a much better manager—because of this understanding.

In other words, you are learning all the time, through everything that happens. Insights can arise from any situation, and be much more widely applicable. This may sound rather philosophical, but it is important to remember.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL SKILLS

Interpersonal skills are important in helping you to navigate a relationship. It is also true to say, however, that your personal skills and qualities are equally important.

The way that you feel about yourself affects the way you treat others, and expect to be treated. Your personal ‘moral compass’ is particularly important in determining what you think is important, and these values are likely to be even more fundamental in romantic relationships than at work. These personal skills may sound old-fashioned, but they are likely to be the foundation of a life well-lived, whether alone or in partnership with someone else. The first part of this book therefore describes the importance of understanding your own values.

SKILLS AND SITUATIONS

The rest of the book focuses on interpersonal skills in relationships. There are some situations that only arise through personal and romantic relationships, such as planning your wedding, or meeting your prospective in-laws for the first time.

These situations may be different from any you have previously encountered, but you should be able to manage them with good interpersonal and personal skills, perhaps with a few tweaks for circumstances.

There are also some skills that are more useful than others in a relationship. You may have acquired them outside the relationship, but you can hone and use them within it, and also improve them for wider use.

This book therefore takes two approaches:

1. It discusses particular situations connected with relationships, and the skills you need to manage these effectively; and
2. It shows you how to apply particular skills to romantic relationships, particularly common interpersonal or managerial skills that you may already have or understand.

It can be easiest to think of the situations you may encounter through relationships by following the course of a relationship. This book therefore follows this approach, but also shows you how to apply your wider skills in the context of a romantic relationship.

**The full eBook
is available at**

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