

THE SKILLS YOU NEED

GUIDE TO PERSONAL AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS



THE SKILLS YOU NEED

GUIDE TO PERSONAL AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Skills You Need

This is one of a series of eBooks
by Skills You Need available for sale at:

www.skillsyouneed.com

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Cover design by Skills You Need; illustrations by Pikisuperstar / Freepik

ISBN: 978-1-911084-28-0

Published by Skills You Need Ltd

© 2020 Skills You Need Ltd

This version was published in June 2020

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: A FLOW OF LEARNING AND SKILLS	6
BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS: THE FLOW OF LEARNING	7
THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL SKILLS	8
SKILLS AND SITUATIONS	8
SKILLS FOR RELATIONSHIPS	10

PART 1 YOURSELF: BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR RELATIONSHIPS

1 SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-CONFIDENCE	13
UNDERSTANDING SELF-ESTEEM	14
IMPROVING YOUR SELF-ESTEEM	15
THE IMPORTANCE OF SMALL STEPS	17
UNDERSTANDING SELF-CONFIDENCE	18
WAYS TO IMPROVE CONFIDENCE	19
2 A FOUNDATION FOR LIVING WELL	23
SIX WAYS OF LIVING	24
SIGNS OF FLOURISHING	26
MAKING A HAPPIER LIFE	29
DEVELOPING A SENSE OF 'GOOD'	29
GOODNESS ACTS AS A COMPASS	30
WORKING OUT WHERE YOU STAND	31
USING YOUR MORAL COMPASS	32
LIVING WELL	33

PART 2 STARTING A RELATIONSHIP

3 NAVIGATING DATING AND DATING APPS	35
ENTERING A MINEFIELD?	36
FINDING A DATE	37
MEETING UP: WHERE, WHEN AND FOR WHAT?	38
THE ETIQUETTE OF CANCELLING	39
SURVIVING DATING	40
A FINAL WORD... ..	40

4	STARTING A RELATIONSHIP	41
	DO YOU WANT TO GO OUT ON A DATE—OR ANOTHER ONE?	42
	ON YOUR DATE	44
	TRUSTING YOUR INSTINCTS	45
	SPECIAL SITUATIONS: STARTING A RELATIONSHIP AT WORK	46
	AND FINALLY...	46
5	BUILDING YOUR RELATIONSHIP	47
	FROM SECOND TO SUBSEQUENT DATE	48
	MOVING FROM DATING TO RELATIONSHIP	49
	FINDING OUT MORE – AND WHETHER YOU LIKE IT	50
	BUILDING THE COMMITMENT	51
	COMMUNICATION IS KEY	52
6	MANAGING WIDER RELATIONSHIPS AS A COUPLE	53
	INTRODUCING YOUR NEW PARTNER TO YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS	54
	MANAGING ONGOING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS	55
	RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN	57
	FINALLY	57
7	THE END OR THE BEGINNING	58
	INITIATING A BREAK-UP	59
	MANAGING IF THE BREAK-UP IS NOT YOUR DECISION	61
	MOVING ON POSITIVELY: MAKING A COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER	62
	FINDING THE RIGHT MOMENT	62
	PLANNING YOUR WEDDING	64
	STARTING YOUR PLANNING	64
	PLANNING AND DELIVERING	65
	MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS DURING THE PROCESS	67
	A FOUNDATION FOR MARRIED LIFE	68
	MAINTAINING A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP	68

PART 3 ESSENTIAL SKILLS IN RELATIONSHIPS

8	GIVING FEEDBACK TO YOUR PARTNER	73
	WHAT IS EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK?	73
	FIVE RULES OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK	74
	DEVELOPING A SKILL TAKES TIME	76

9	JOINT DECISION-MAKING IN RELATIONSHIPS	77
	WAYS TO DECIDE	78
	RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS AND DEVELOPING DECISIONS	79
	DECISIONS, PERSUASION AND NEGOTIATION	82
10	HAVING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS	83
	BEFORE YOU BEGIN	84
	HAVING BETTER CONVERSATIONS	85
	STEPS TO TAKE IF THE CONVERSATION GOES BADLY	87
	THE BENEFITS OF DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS	88
11	NEGOTIATION AND PERSUASION IN PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS	89
	ASKING FOR HELP	90
	WHAT <u>NOT</u> TO DO	91
	NEGOTIATING SKILLS FOR COUPLES AND FAMILIES	92
	A JOINT EFFORT	93
12	ASSERTIVENESS IN RELATIONSHIPS	94
	ASSERTIVENESS AND BEHAVIOUR	95
	THE 'FLIP SIDE': NON-ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOUR	97
	IMPROVING YOUR ASSERTIVENESS	98
	A FOUNDATION OF RESPECT	99
13	MANAGING CONFLICT IN RELATIONSHIPS	100
	CONFLICT IN A RELATIONSHIP	101
	MOVING TOWARDS COLLABORATION	104
	REMEMBER...	105
	CONCLUSION: A LIFETIME'S WORK	106

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**

www.skillsyouneed.com