Extract **AMY JACOBSON**

HOW TO GET ALONG WITH PEOPLE YOU DON'T LIKE

There are always some people we will clash with, but we can learn how to respond in an emotionally intelligent way to those who 'push our buttons'

It is always going to happen. We will find ourselves in front of people that we don't like whether it is in the workplace or in social settings. People that really "push our buttons" or personalities we clash with.

Our blood pressure rises, and we bite our tongue not to say what we really think. Or at times, our emotional brain gets the better of us and we just say it and feel the repercussions come rolling in.

Other people are not a failed version of us.

The reason we don't all get along is simply because we all have different wiring in our mind.

Our core values, beliefs, life experiences, opinions can be very similar, but they will still differ.

Our mind is confident that the way that we think or do things is of course the right way.

That's why we do it that way, because we believe it's the right way. So, when someone has a different opinion or does it differently to us, our mind struggles to understand.

It questions why they are different and why don't they agree, believe and do things the way we do them.

Our mind has been rewarded for being right since early childhood.

Saying the right thing, getting the right answer, we've wired ourselves with the need to be right so when someone has a different opinion or something doesn't align with our wiring, it raises red flags for us.

Fear of failure, judgment, loss of control, the unknown, all start to kick in and our amygdala "fight or flight" (emotional brain) is triggered.

We get frustrated because ultimately, in our head, we see that person as a failed version of us.

Human behaviour specialist and author Amy Jacobson, top right. Her latest book The Emotional Intelligence Advantage tackles how to resolve challenges in the workplace. Picture: Donna Fortune Photography

HOW TO GET ALONG BETTER WITH OTHERS

This is where the emotional intelligence process comes into play. To gain control of our amygdala and respond in an emotionally intelligent way, we go through these 5 steps:

OWN IT:

We will always come across people with different values, beliefs, opinions and ways of doing things, and we have no control over them or anyone else in this world. In fact, they might not like us either.

We are certainly not perfect and are generally quite comfortable to admit this, yet our expectations of those around us are always generally high. Own reality and own that every person is different, and that's ok.

Being different is what makes us human beings and not robots, don't fight it, own it.

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FACE IT:
Face the emotions that we are feeling. Why is it bothering us so much? Why is it so important for them to agree with us or be the same as us?

Face each core emotion to understand what the driver is and what outcome it would take for us to be ok with this emotion.

Remember that people and situations can't make us feel a specific emotion or feel a certain way. People and situations happen, we choose how we respond based on our neural pathways in our mind that have been created based on our values, beliefs, habits, long-term memories and every part of our life. The only thing we have control of in this world is how we choose to respond.

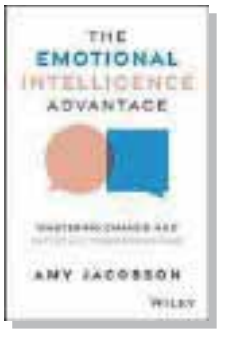
FEEL IT:
Now is when we get out of our own head and understand how the other person is feeling and how it is aligned to their wiring. It's not always about us. So, they have a different point of view, so what! Does it really matter? We don't have to be best friends, but respect goes a long way and is fundamental with EI.

There really doesn't need to be right and wrong in every situation, sometimes there are just differences and that's ok. What are you both looking to get out of it?

ASK IT:
Ask questions and be curious.

Absolutely share thoughts, learnings and opinions but don't force your differences upon them, ask open questions rather than making closed statements.

Look to understand their values and beliefs and what's driving them without judgment.



Eventually there will come a point where it doesn't matter how many questions you ask or how well you listen, there is a difference between the two of you and that's ok to be different. Don't feel like you need to reach an agreement, you can still have a great conversation and respect differences.

DRIVE IT:
What is the purpose of this interaction or relationship?

If it's social, are you there for someone else? If so, remember your core purpose and focus your energy on that while maintaining respect for the sake of that relationship.

If it's work, is the interaction appropriate? If at any point it is inappropriate, it absolutely should be called out and acted on.

If it isn't and it's simply a personality or difference of opinion, what is the outcome we are looking for and how do we best achieve that outcome. Focus on the end result, remove egos and the desire to "win".

The outcome is what matters.

It's not easy being around people that question our values and beliefs or that we simply don't gel with but there is always an opportunity to be emotionally intelligent.

EI is a skill not a personality trait. It takes skill and practice, and we don't always get it right. On those days when we are struggling or not feeling very emotionally intelligent, it's best to politely remove ourselves from the conversation or interaction.

Like hindsight, reflection is a wonderful thing. ■

Amy Jacobson is an EI and human behaviour specialist and a twice Wiley-published author of Emotional Intelligence: A simple and actionable guide to increasing performance, engagement and ownership, and the new book The Emotional Intelligence Advantage: Mastering change and difficult conversations
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