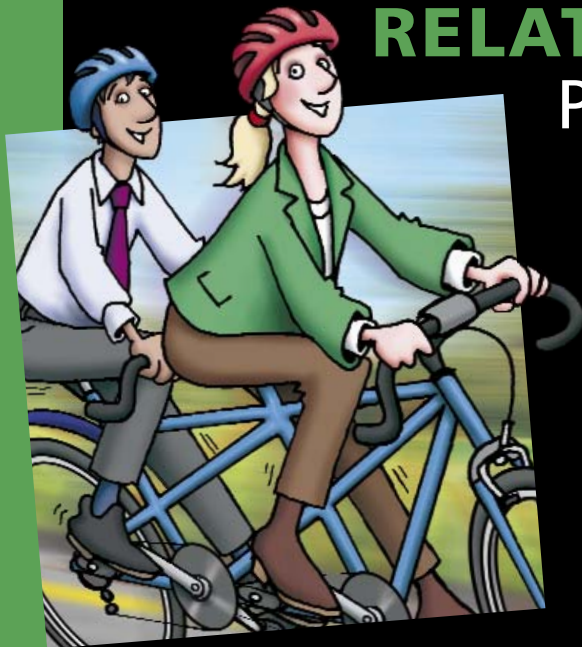


WORKING RELATIONSHIPS Pocketbook



A pocketful of tips and techniques to create, develop and sustain effective working relationships

Fiona Elsa Dent

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THE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS POCKETBOOK

By Fiona Elsa Dent

Drawings by Phil Hailstone

"The world of work has rightly turned its attention to relationships. The healthy tension between the relationship with oneself and with others, both personally and professionally, is at the hub of a fulfilling life. When these relationships are fruitful, there is dynamic movement and progress. When there is difficulty, the resulting dilemmas can provide the route map for the changes needed. This book provides a valuable outworking of some of these principles and I commend it to you."

Philippa Morrison, Faculty and Senior Staff Development Advisor, London Business School



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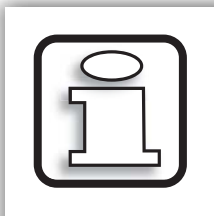
WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

THANKS FROM THE AUTHOR



I'd like to express my thanks to:

- All the participants on the many development programmes where relationship issues have been discussed, who have helped me formulate my thoughts and ideas
- All the people who took part in my research and helped contribute to the ideas expressed in this book
- My colleagues at Ashridge who work with me on the Creating Working Relationships Programme
- Jan for helping with proof reading and sense making
- My family, who provide me with my best 'working' relationship



INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

SOCIAL BEINGS



‘Consider the following. We humans are social beings. We come into the world as the result of others' actions. We survive here in dependence on others. Whether we like it or not, there is hardly a moment of our lives when we do not benefit from others' activities. For this reason it is hardly surprising that most of our happiness arises in the context of our relationships with others.’

The Dalai Lama

INTRODUCTION

IMPROVING THE SOFT SKILLS



21st century organisations require 21st century skills and abilities. Ongoing research undertaken at the Centre for Creative Leadership suggests that one of the emerging distinguishing features of success will be higher awareness of, and improved ability in, the so called 'soft skills'. One area that requires these soft skills, and consistently emerges as a challenge for today's leaders and managers, is that of developing and managing effective work based relationships.

Awareness of this led me to embark upon a research project to help me understand more about how and why people create relationships, what they do to sustain them, what makes these relationships succeed and what makes them go wrong. To gather the data I used a variety of techniques including a questionnaire, interviews and focus groups.

The book suggests ideas, knowledge, tools and techniques that will help people in organisations better understand what's necessary to be successful in this complex and often messy area.

INTRODUCTION

WHO THIS BOOK IS FOR



The focus of the book is on helping you to recognise and identify your own approach to relationships at work. By doing this you will, in turn, become better able to identify and understand the differences in other people's approaches and modify your own behaviour accordingly. It is this modification, allied to good interpersonal and communication skills that will allow you to improve your relationships.

The book is intended for:

- Any person working in any type of organisation who wants to know more about how to make the best of their work based relationships
- People who want to understand more about their own approach to relationships at work and to learn some tips and techniques to help them improve their interpersonal skills

People who wish to explore, develop, and be more effective in any relationship, whether at work or elsewhere, might also find it useful.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IT COVERS



The book is **not** intended to be a manual for handling bullies or dealing with serious workplace conflict. It **is** about the range of interpersonal skills that contribute to effective relationship management and it may, therefore, help you understand elements of these difficult relationships and provide you with ideas for making improvements.

It will encourage you to reflect on the range and quality of your work based relationships and offer tips, techniques and ideas to help you develop and improve them.

The first half of the book focuses on self-reflection and asks you to consider:

- Why you create relationships
- What makes you develop and sustain relationships
- Your relationship style

The second part of the book examines features and tools that you can apply to your relationship approach.

INTRODUCTION

TYPICAL PROBLEM AREAS



These are some of the typical reasons people give for wanting to develop and improve their relationship management skills:

- To help deal with people problems at work
- To help manage relationships with the boss/colleagues/reports
- To deal more effectively with 'difficult' people
- To increase confidence and skill
- To help get things done
- To cope with organisational and office politics
- To be a more effective leader
- To manage change more effectively
- To understand the skills, techniques and approaches for successful interpersonal relationships



INTRODUCTION

TYPICAL PROBLEM AREAS



'The No 1 factor for derailment is poor interpersonal skills – our inability to get along with people.'

John Alexander (President of the Centre for Creative Leadership)

Personal reflection

Think about the following two questions regarding your own work based relationships:

- What relationship challenges do I face?
- Why do I want to develop my relationship skills?