

THE 4 HABITS



WHY SOME RELATIONSHIPS DON'T WORK & OTHERS DO

A short eBook (10 min read) by
Dr. Andrea & Jon Taylor-Cummings

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THE **4**
HABITS

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CHAPTER

WHY SOME
RELATIONSHIPS DON'T
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FALLING AT THE HURDLES...

You only have to have been in any kind of relationship – at home or at work – for a short while to know that at some point challenges will arise. Whether it's minutes, hours, days, weeks (most likely), months or even years, at some point you're going to see things differently... and if the different views are held sufficiently strongly (on either side), conflict is likely to follow.

We call those moments of conflict 'relationship hurdles'. Every relationship has them.

But the hurdles themselves are not the problem. The problem is that, unlike the Olympic hurdler who prepares for getting over them efficiently before a race, most of us enter the 'relationship race' 1) with no idea that the hurdles exist, and 2) with no preparation for getting over them.

As a result, the hurdles often come as a nasty surprise. And when we hit too many hurdles, many of us start considering our options for bowing out of the race.



Unsuccessful relationships fall over at the hurdles

And the hurdles don't have to be big things either. They generally show up as disagreements over:

- **Different ways of wanting to do things** (e.g., you're more of a planner – they're more impulsive).
- **Different approaches to conflict and ways of handling stress** (e.g., you're a talker – they want 'time out').
- **Different values and assumptions** (e.g., roles & responsibilities at home - who does the cooking, cleaning, taking the bins out?).
- **Different ways of feeling valued** (e.g., you need to 'hear' you're valued – they need to 'see' you do things to feel valued).

We're all as unique as our fingerprints, so it's inevitable that at some point we're going to see things differently.

A key step on the road to success comes from first recognising the inevitability of conflict in relationships, and then learning how to get over the hurdles when they arise.

NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO

The failure of many relationships is often put down to 'poor communication'. One guy who reached out to us for help (we'll call him Sanjay) put it like this:

“

I'm really struggling to communicate properly with my wife (Deepti). She keeps forgetting to do simple things, which I find really irritating, and then she doesn't like it when I try to laugh it off with sarcasm. On my side, I keep trying to do the things I know she likes, but I either fall short of the mark, or I don't talk to her about my plans...and then she gets upset because I haven't done some things or communicated my intentions.

I'm also not so good at communicating what I love about her in the moment – like when I sometimes peek in on her and see the really caring side of her as she teaches the kids in her class. I think she's only going to think I'm patronising her. And then the moment passes, and it feels awkward bringing it up, and so it never gets said.

I know I need to get better at communicating. I just don't know how to do it.

”

'Poor communication skills' were certainly an issue for Sanjay... but was it one-sided? No. If you didn't pick them up the first time, re-read the paragraphs above. You'll see both he and Deepti were doing things that were communicating negative messages.

That they were both doing these things unintentionally is also vital. We're yet to meet anyone who went into a relationship intentionally trying to wreck it! Yet still, from time to time, we all do things that 'land' badly.

Sanjay called it 'poor communication'. We would describe it as a combination of not knowing either what to do or what not to do. Success comes from knowing the difference between the two and then a) learning how to stop doing the things that aren't helping, while b) getting better about doing the things that do help. That's how you build SKILL in managing your Relationships.

Another way of putting it...

Success comes from building your Relational Intelligence (*your RQ*)!

It was Daniel Goleman who first popularised the concept of Emotional Intelligence (or EQ) back in the 1990s, based on his research into what made some CEOs more successful than others. He concluded that success in life is at least as dependent on your EQ, as it is on your IQ.

RQ is different still. While EQ is about learning to handle your own emotions and how they impact on the people around you,, Relational Intelligence focuses more on how you establish connections and interact successfully with them. Relational Intelligence includes Emotional Intelligence, but is much more.

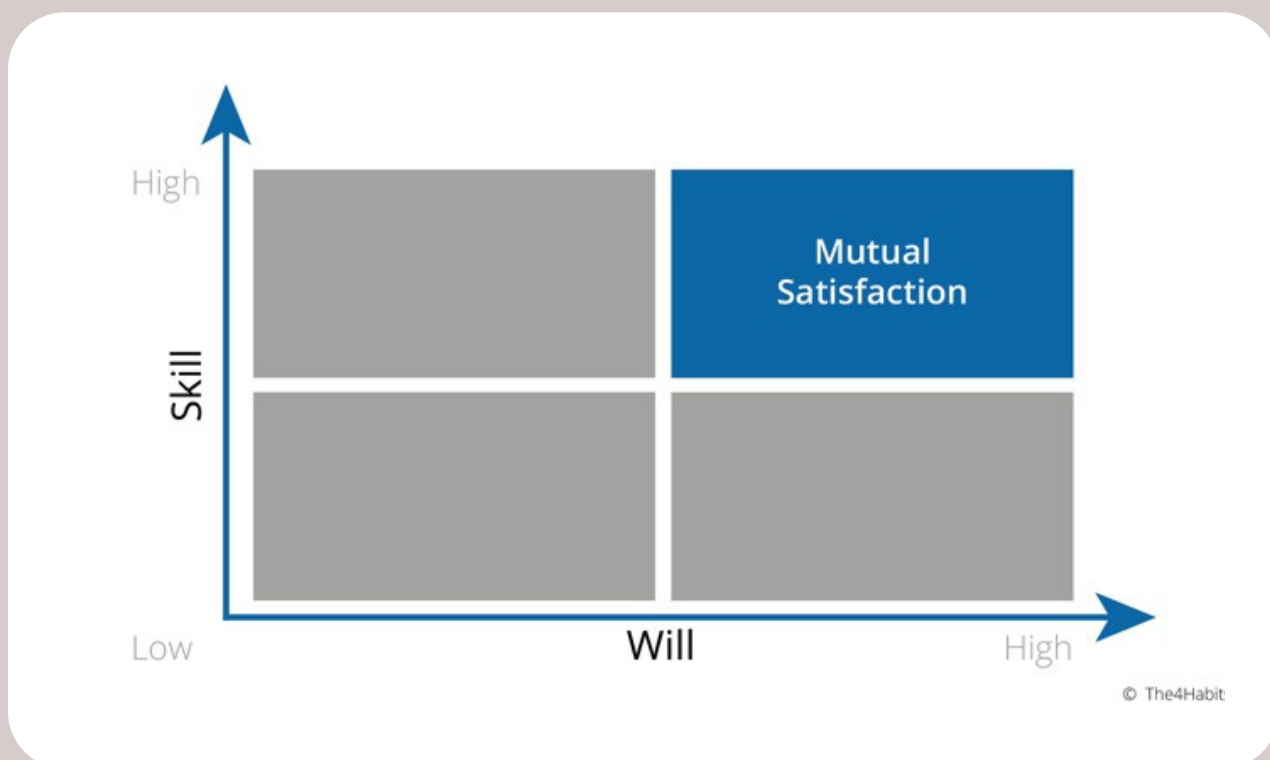


Relational Intelligence is really about two key things:

1. Your ability to handle various situations in your relationships with the appropriate SKILL, and
2. Your ability to maintain the WILL to keep the relationship alive.

It follows that the greater the Relational Intelligence of both parties in the relationship, the more likely the relationship is to feel 'mutually satisfying'.

Most relationships start out in the *Mutual Satisfaction* zone - think *Probation* or *Honeymoon* period. The rose tinted glasses are very much on, and everyone is trying to impress.



In these early days though, the feeling of Mutual Satisfaction is more *by chance* than *by choice* - with goodwill generally masking any lack of *Skill*. However, as we've all experienced, before long people relax and drop their guard, and little irritations begin to show.

Over time, without the *Skill* to overcome problems, frustrations start to chip away at *Will*, and problems can start to surface in the relationship.

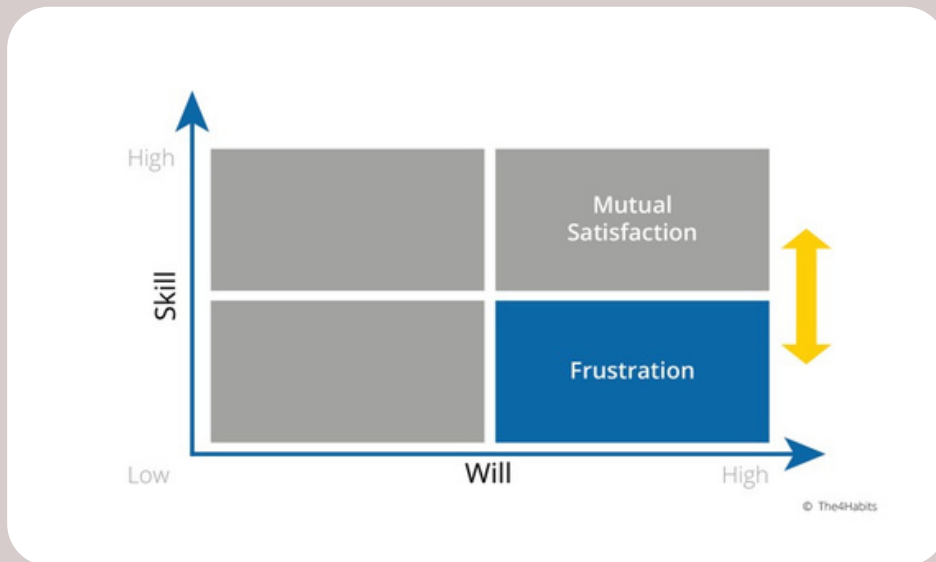
NOT KNOWING *HOW* TO IMPROVE THINGS

We've all been in situations where we've done what we think is pretty "standard", and gotten a result that wasn't quite what we were expecting. And despite the negative result (unless it was a particularly dramatic one!), we've kept on doing the same thing!

Let's say you did something, and your partner is upset with you. You decided to stay quiet because you didn't want to say the wrong thing and escalate matters. But your partner thinks you're ignoring them and storms off. This becomes a predictable pattern of behaviour, but neither of you knows how to stop it.

Sometimes we get stuck in patterns of behaviours because that's all we know to do, and somehow, we expect the other person - whether it's your partner, friend or colleague - will eventually react or respond in the way *we would*. When they don't, the relationship moves into the 'Frustration' zone.



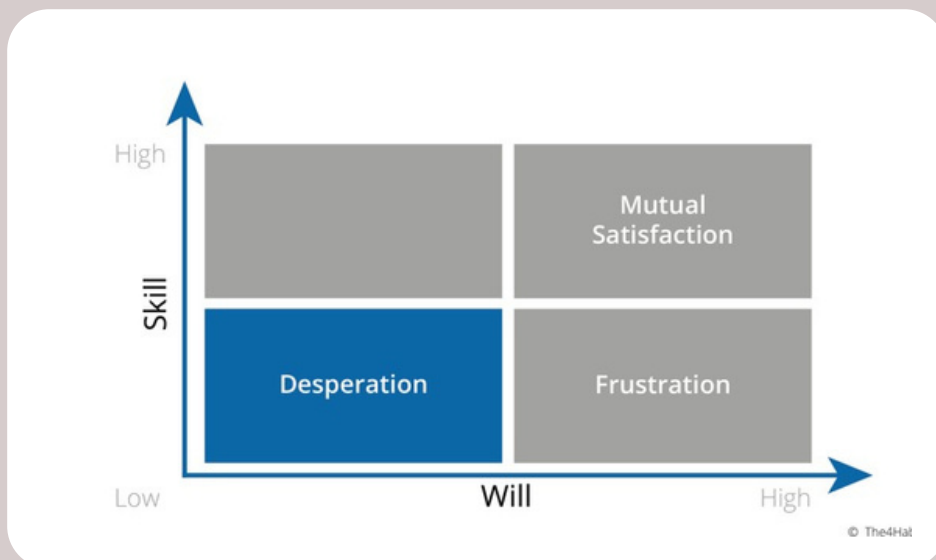


Quite often relationships flip-flop between 'Frustration' and 'Mutual Satisfaction'. This is both normal and okay, as long as the relationship spends a good amount of time in the 'Mutual Satisfaction' zone.

Learning the right thing to do in 'Frustration', and then doing it is key to getting back to 'Mutual Satisfaction' as quickly as possible.

But not knowing what to do and doing nothing, leaves relationships stuck in frustration.

And when relationships are stuck in frustration for too long, it's easy to begin to lose the *Will* and slip down into the danger 'Desperation' zone..



There, we feel like we've tried all we know to do, and nothing has worked, so we can start to believe this is *as good as it gets*. We begin to question the long-term prospects for the relationship. And when those feelings are left unchecked, 'voting with our feet' starts to become an option - Break up. Divorce. Leave the job.

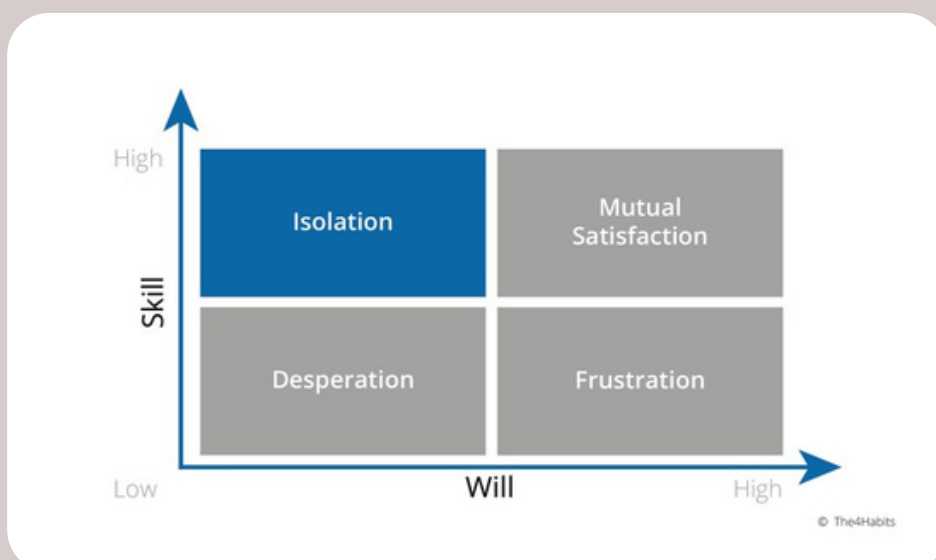
As Einstein said though: *'We cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that got us there'*. Getting back to 'Mutual Satisfaction' from 'Desperation' requires a combination of finding out the right thing to do (*Skill*) and doing it (rebuilding the *Will*).

Building great relationships takes both *Skill* and *Will*, which means we have to be intentional about learning and developing them.

But perhaps even worse than being in 'Desperation', is when one or both of you actually know the right thing to do but decide not to do it. Quite often, it's because all the goodwill has drained out of the relationship, along with any willingness to try anymore. Those relationships feel like living in 'Isolation'.

Outside of abusive relationships, success here comes from getting help to have the necessary *Courageous Conversations* to address long-standing, deep-seated issues, rebuild commitment, and rekindle the *Will* to do what you know, or find out what else you could be doing for success.

Either way, where relationships fail, it's generally due to a lack of Skill, which ultimately leads to a lack of Will to keep the relationship alive.



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C H A P T E R
2

WHY OTHER
RELATIONSHIPS DO
(WORK)

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Success in relationships does *not* necessarily come from 'compatibility'. Of course, it helps if you have more things in common than you have differences – it means you'll have less to argue about – but successful relationships do not necessarily come from teaming up with people as close to you as possible.

Long-term success in relationships doesn't even necessarily come from being in relationships with people we 'like'. Again, of course it helps if we like them (and quite often that's what gets the relationship started)... but what happens to those feelings if they start repeatedly doing things we don't like?

When you think about it, we don't get to choose our biological children or our parents. Yet still most of us find ways to make those relationships work.

Equally, if you only chose your boss or your team colleagues based on who you like at work, what would that mean for you every time someone close to you in a work setting moved on to a different role?

Long-term success in relationships does not come simply from liking the people we're relating to.



So, what creates long-term success in relationships? There are three popular answers to this...

LUCK OF THE DRAW!

It's true that to some extent, success in long-term relationships comes down to 'the luck of the draw'. In most situations you think, feel and act the same and, because this reduces the opportunity for conflict, it feels easy to get along.



As research has shown though, the downside of those kinds of relationships is that they tend to not make for the best teams – too many similarities mean you typically have the same blind spots, and so risk missing out on certain opportunities.

More importantly, this kind of luck, while helpful, is not sufficient to guarantee long-term success in relationships. The problem is it provides a false sense of security which can run out when you least expect it – e.g., when faced with new challenges that cause you to react differently.

And to be honest, if you're reading this E-Book, chances are you're not feeling particularly lucky right now!

COMMITMENT

Another key factor influencing long-term success in relationships comes from adopting a *commitment* mindset. Here, there is a recognition that it won't always be plain sailing, but the long-term gains will outweigh the short-term bumps along the way.

This helps explain why some arranged marriages work.

But of course, while deciding to stick together through 'thick and thin' makes for a good foundation in any relationship, it doesn't necessarily guarantee that you will enjoy the journey. Many people live and/or work in committed relationships for years – decades even – without particularly feeling satisfied.

But of course, while deciding to stick together through 'thick and thin' makes for a good foundation in any relationship, it doesn't necessarily guarantee that you will enjoy the journey. Many people live and/or work in committed relationships for years – decades even – without particularly feeling satisfied.

Commitment is a necessary, but not sufficient, ingredient for long-term success.



INTENTIONALITY

The third, and perhaps most certain way of achieving long-term success in relationships comes when people exercise *intentionality*.

Intentionality is what people demonstrate when they go beyond commitment to the relationship and pursue an on-going determination to learn and practice *how* to make things work.

Intentionality is about plugging into each other to keep the relationship alive and mutually satisfying *on purpose*.

And part of that determination comes from adopting a mindset that puts the relationship ahead of each other's needs. From time to time that will require you to say, '*I know I would prefer this, but for the relationship's sake, I'm happy to do that – because I know that's what you'd prefer*'.

And this principle holds true whether the relationship is romantic, in a workplace, or any other kind of team.

The greatest chance for success in relationships comes when people decide to take personal responsibility for learning and practising how to work together well.

Success comes from putting in the effort to understand how our behaviour impacts others, and then doing what it takes to ensure the impact is more positive than negative.

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CHAPTER

BUILDING MUTUALLY
SATISFYING
RELATIONSHIPS ON
PURPOSE

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UNDERSTANDING THE POWER OF EMOTIONAL BANK ACCOUNTS

In the early days of just about any relationship - new job, new romance, new club - feelings are generally positive. And for as long as the feelings continue to be positive, the relationship *feels* good.

A concept that describes this well is the 'Emotional Bank Account'.

Our Emotional Bank Accounts (EBAs) are those mental records we all keep of every interaction we experience with the people around us. We automatically set up an EBA every time we meet a new person (and they set one up for us too). In our EBA for that person, we keep a mental record of every interaction we have with them, whether it's positive or negative. We record positive interactions as deposits into the EBA, and negative ones as withdrawals.

Interaction we have with them, whether it's positive or negative. We record positive interactions as deposits into the EBA, and negative ones as withdrawals.

Where the net balance of your EBA for a particular individual is positive, for you the relationship feels good, possibly even great. Where it drains to zero or goes negative (overdraft territory!) the relationship feels scratchy – everything becomes a problem (kind of like it is with a financial bank account).

Crucially though, note that how your interactions land in someone else's EBA has nothing to do with how *you* intended them to land.

Interactions score as deposits or as withdrawals entirely dependent on *how the other person* perceives them.

It's all about perception – *theirs*, not yours.

As we said earlier, we're yet to find a person who started a new role or a committed relationship trying to wreck it, or wanting to be miserable! The problem is quite often we do things with the best intentions, but sometimes they don't meet other people's expectations, or they land badly and end up being withdrawals for them.

THE FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

Success comes from managing and keeping EBAs in positive territory.

There are two steps to doing that:



1

Learn *WHAT* you are doing that is causing withdrawals in other people's EBAs... and stop!



2

Learn *HOW* to make proactive deposits in their EBA.

It helps if, at the same time, they are doing likewise for you!
(But somebody has to start first, right?!)

So how do you do you manage EBAs in practice?

In our experience of working with relationships over the past 25+ years, we've come to recognise that developing four simple habits gives you the *Skill* you need to minimise withdrawals and maximise deposits, and help maintain the *Will* to keep your relationships alive and healthy.

We first spoke about these **4 Habits of All Successful Relationships** in our May 2019 TEDx talk, which continues to resonate strongly with now over 3 million views (and climbing by circa 1,000 views per day!)

If you haven't seen the talk, and would like a quick overview of The 4 Habits©, check it out here on YouTube: [The 4 Habits of ALL Successful Relationships](#)

The power in The 4 Habits© comes from the fact that they provide a simple formula for improving Relationships. They provide a series of practical HOW TOs for building your RQ.

Habits #1 (BE CURIOUS, not critical) and #2 (BE CAREFUL, not crushing) help you minimise unintentional withdrawals in EBAs. Habits #3 (ASK, don't assume) and #4 (CONNECT, before you correct) help you make deposits, on purpose.

Now, of course, none of this is rocket science, but it's not automatic either! Anybody can kick a ball, but not everybody can consistently score a goal or become an NFL / Premier League football player. That takes learning specific skills and deliberate practice to perform well even under pressure.

Success in Relationships comes from taking personal responsibility for learning The 4 Habits© and changing your behaviours from habits that are damaging your relationships, to habits that will strengthen them, on purpose.



THE **4**
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C H A P T E R
4

DOING WHAT IT TAKES

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By now you will likely have identified a handful of behaviour patterns in your relationship(s) that could be improved. Our guess is that if you've gotten this far in this E-Book, your relationships are important to you, and you're looking for ways to strengthen them.

The great news is that by becoming intentional about relationships, you can achieve consistent results in the quality of relationships you enjoy. All it takes is a commitment to following the simple principles outlined above to start changing your mindset and developing those 4 foundational habits that will strengthen rather than damage your relationships.



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TAKING ACTION

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Of course, you're welcome to take everything we've shared with you in this short book and have a go at working on it yourself. Take some time to process what you've learned, and figure out how to make The 4 Habits show up in your daily interactions. And if that's what you decide to do, great!

....

But if you'd like a bit more help, we have an opportunity for you.

What if you could be taken by the hand and guided through each of the principles you need to grasp? What if you were given the practical steps – the actual HOW TOs – to help you change your behaviours, get unstuck and achieve the results you want in your relationship?

Would that be helpful for you?

If your heart said yes, then this is for you!

Relationship Success Accelerator is an online course that will help you radically transform the way you do relationships.

It has helped countless individuals just like you to overcome struggles and breathe more life and fun into their relationships. In it, we explain everything to you in a series of short videos, reflection questions and exercises. Each module takes about 30-45 minutes to complete.

Find out more here: [Relationship Success Accelerator](#)

What people are saying about our courses...

Brilliant! So practical and helpful in building awareness and the skills to communicate effectively.' - A.W.

'Really helpful course. I have learned so much in such a short space of time... and all in really practical ways. My wife has already got a smile on her face. And so do I! I couldn't recommend this course more highly. Thank you so much Andrea and Jon!' - J.T.



OUR MISSION

In 2017, Dr. Andrea & Jonathan Taylor-Cummings founded 4 Habits Consulting to formalise their 25 years of working with relationships into an organization with the vision to reduce relationship breakdown across the globe. The mission - proactively equipping everyone to develop strong relationship capability ahead of challenges, so they can thrive at work and at home. This approach stands in stark contrast to the current reactive mindset of waiting to offer counselling and other late-stage interventions when relationships breakdown.

AT HOME



With the stats revealing that roughly half of all couple-relationships in the developed world don't go the distance and that family breakdown is an increasing cause of mental health concerns in our youth, they set out to sound the alarm about the devastating trend of relationship breakdown, inspire people to take action and offer a clear way forward.

In March 2019, they had the privilege of delivering a TEDx Talk in the heart of the City of London, sounding the alarm for the need for proactive relationship education and highlighting the 4 simple, yet fundamental, habits for successful relationships. The talk now has in excess of 3 million views, and continues to grow at around 1,000 views a day!

AT WORK



4 Habits Consulting also helps companies create healthier, more productive, and more inclusive cultures by changing behaviours from habits that are damaging relationships, to habits that strengthen them, *on purpose*. Quite often the bit missing from many Leadership Development, Diversity & Inclusion and Wellbeing programmes are the specific behaviour changes needed to “make things stick” and hold people accountable for their part in creating real behaviour change. That's what we do.

With a focus on achieving lasting behaviour change, we equip leaders & teams with the tools and skills to improve overall Relational Intelligence and one-on-one interactions, around four fundamental habits for successful relationships. This means people are empowered to “turn up better”, have better conversations and achieve better outcomes – at work, at home and in life.

Specifically, 4 Habits Consulting helps companies & organizations achieve the following strategic objectives :

- Developing Inclusive Behaviours and Cultures
- Building Social Health in the Hybrid Environment
- Fostering Emotionally Intelligent Leadership
- Creating Healthy Boundaries and Life Balance

ORGANIZATIONS WE HAVE WORKED WITH INCLUDE...



OUR CHARITY WORK

In April 2020, Jon & Andrea set up Soulmates Academy Foundation, a UK registered charity with the ambitious vision to 'equip 1 million people over the next 10 years to do relationships well', without the cost typically associated with personal and professional development.

The charity's work to date has been almost entirely self-funded. Recognising that the task before us is a huge one, if this resonates with you in any way, we warmly invite you to partner with us and help fund this work.

soulmates
ACADEMY FOUNDATION

Find out more and get involved here:
www.support-SMAF.org

Thanks in advance for any support you can give.

OUR FOUNDERS...



Dr. ANDREA TAYLOR-CUMMINGS has over 30 years' experience as an organisation development consultant, specialising in relationship-centred behaviour change, creating inclusive cultures and 'people' strategy. She has worked internationally (Jamaica, UK, Japan, and Korea) in both the public and private sector, as a consultant with 'big four' and niche consultancies, and as an entrepreneur. She offers extensive experience in designing and delivering leadership / people development programmes for diverse, global audiences, using both live and online workshops to achieve clear business goals. Andrea is a Rhodes Scholar, holds a First-Class honours degree in Computer Science from the University of the West Indies, and both master's and doctorate degrees in Management Studies from Oxford University.

JONATHAN TAYLOR-CUMMINGS has spent much of the last 30 years in professional service environments, helping both blue-chips (Credit Suisse, Bank of America Merrill Lynch) and start-ups grow and develop corporate assets and client relationships to deliver a wide range of services across the banking, pensions, and consulting sectors. He offers strengths in building client engagement, aligning operations and developing relationships. Jon holds a master's degree in Management Studies from Oxford University, a First-Class honours degree in Electronic Engineering with Computer Science from the University College London, and is a graduate of Seth Godin's altMBA online leadership and management program.