

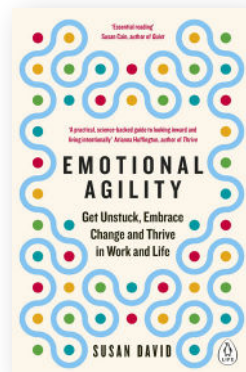


EMOTIONAL AGILITY

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THE BOOK



Emotional Agility

By Susan David



INTRODUCTION

With Emotional Agility, business consultant and psychologist Dr Susan David has created a game-changing guide for anyone who wants to live their best life.

If you're 'emotionally rigid', you're blind to new experiences and possibilities. You'll find yourself stuck on the same path, even though it has made you unhappy for years. In her book, Dr David explains how to embrace emotional agility and make your feelings work for you instead of against you.

This book is full of thoroughly researched detail as well as amusing anecdotes as it explains how you can live your best life.

Emotional Agility is a journey through yourself and an invaluable lesson on how to make that self better.



5 BEST QUOTES

"Courage is not an absence of fear; courage is fear walking."

"The most effective way to transform your life, therefore, is not by quitting your job and moving to an ashram, but, to paraphrase Teddy Roosevelt, by doing what you can, with what you have, where you are."

"In looking for the right places to make these tiny changes, there are three broad areas of opportunity. You can tweak your beliefs—or what psychologists call your mindset; you can tweak your motivations; and you can tweak your habits. When we learn how to make small changes in each of these areas, we set ourselves up to make profound, lasting change over the course of our lives."

"People frequently die in fires or crash landings because they try to escape through the same door they used when they entered."

"Who's in charge—the thinker or the thought?" Are we managing our own lives according to our own values and what is important to us, or are we simply being carried along by the tide?"



8 BIG IDEAS

1. RIGIDITY VS AGILITY

Emotional rigidity means that you are stuck in your ideas and emotions. Picture a Naval officer demanding a lighthouse change course without realising it wasn't a ship. The belief was that his vessel had right of way but such rigid thinking could have led to catastrophe! Adopting agility in your emotions is more likely to steer you on the right path and allow you to be flexible when you need to be.

2. HOOKED

Dr David describes the 'hook' that Hollywood scripts use to inspire interest. The hook is the basic premise that is there to lure in the audience and to keep them interested. In our own everyday lives, a 'hook' is a thought or emotion that draws us in and keeps us preoccupied. These hooks are often drawn from simple facts that we distort through our own evaluations and worries. For instance, thinking about school may lead to thinking 'I never get the marks I want'. We can all too easily learn to live by these hooks and they are often extremely counter-productive.

The four most common hooks are:

1. Thought blaming: - "I thought I'd embarrass myself, so I didn't go."
2. Monkey mindedness: Dwelling at length on a situation and 'awfulising' the circumstances.
3. Old, outgrown ideas: Believing that you must always act in ways that you have in the past, even when the circumstances might prove otherwise.
4. Wrongheaded Righteousness: The need to be 'right' at all costs.

3. GETTING UNHOOKED

Dr David describes 'bottlers' and 'brooders' when it comes to getting unhooked. Bottlers refuse to acknowledge negative emotions. Brooders spend altogether too much time dwelling on them. The bottler's emotions are suppressed until they explode outwards when the pressure becomes too much. The brooder's emotions overwhelm them and drag them down. Dr David says that finding a happy medium is the best way to become unhooked. Accept negative emotions for what they are, let yourself feel them but don't let them take over. Doing this can help you to find the best way to move forward.



8 BIG IDEAS

4. SHOWING UP

It is important to accept and acknowledge emotions as they arise. This is what Dr David calls 'showing up'. Showing up to your emotions can allow you to feel what you need to feel as well as working through your negative emotions. Showing up lets you validate your feelings. Whether they are appropriate or not, they are your feelings and you are entitled to feel them.

5. STEPPING OUT

Stepping out is the next element. After allowing yourself to feel your feelings, showing up requires you to face them. Stepping out reminds you to take an objective view and assess your emotions. This can help you filter feelings that may not be entirely appropriate and to find ways to deal with what you are feeling. When you step out objectively, you are in control of your feelings and not the other way around.

6. WALKING YOUR WHY

'Walking your why' means discovering what is important to you and acting accordingly. When you walk your why, you live by your personal values as closely as you possibly can. Living by your values will help to make your life more meaningful and satisfying. While it is not always possible to work or live the exact life you wish, there is usually a way to make your life or job fit better within your values.

7. TINY TWEAKS

Small tweaks make the journey towards walking your why easier. You can find ways to make your work more fulfilling by finding what it is about your job that fits your values, finding ways to expand your job to fit your values or, if all else fails, working out a way to move on. Rather than brooding or bottling negative emotions around a life situation that you find unsatisfactory, make a tiny tweak. Talk to your boss or your partner and work on a change that will improve your quality of life.

8. THE SEE-SAW PRINCIPLE

In life, you need to find the fine line between challenge and boredom. The see-saw principle is about finding that balance. If you find yourself in over your head, you need to seek help or support. On the other hand, if your level of competence makes you bored or complacent it is time to find ways to increase the challenges in your life. A fulfilling life means enjoying challenge without being overwhelmed. In fact, David says that 'whelmed' is the best place to be!

**3 ACTION STEPS**

Emotional Agility presents methods to live life to its fullest by rejecting emotional rigidity. Here are three keys steps to achieving this:

1. ACCEPT AND EMBRACE YOUR EMOTIONS

Everyone has emotions! It is a part of who we are. Learning to accept this is the first step to becoming emotionally agile.

If you are ruled by your emotions or spend all your time trying to stay on top of them, you are displaying emotional rigidity. Pain is a part of life just as much as happiness.

2. STEP AWAY FROM YOUR EMOTIONS

Once you have stepped away from your emotions, see them objectively then try to find the most appropriate ways to react.

Think of yourself as the chessboard, awash with possible moves, not as a single piece confined to a single pattern

3. LIVE BY WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU

After analysing your emotions, turn them to work towards your values. Live your life the way you believe you should and find ways to tweak life to fit what you value most.

**1 KEY TAKEAWAY**

With Emotional Agility, Susan David's aim is to help you live the life that you want.

You should appoint yourself the agent of your own life while accepting your full self. Feel your emotions but don't allow them to rule you. Allowing this agility lets you make the most of your emotions by using them to learn what you really value.

Once you have understood what it is that you value, don't be afraid to move forward and tweak things as opportunities arise. Mould your life to your values, not the other way around. Emotional agility is a method to let go of preconceptions and static thinking and to work towards a better life.

Take what life brings and make the most of it. By 'turning up' and stepping out' you can enjoy the good times and weather the bad. As a friend of David's with the life-changing disease ALS said, "Dance when you can."



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Read the full book

Emotional Agility

by Susan David

David on meeting hard emotions with curiosity, not avoidance.

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