

People
can't be
fixed



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Clare seemed very distressed. “I’m thirty years old, unemployed and still live at home with my parents. There are only two reasons why I can’t get a job. Either there’s something wrong with the world or there’s something wrong with me. Clearly, the world isn’t to blame for where I’m at in life at present, so the problem clearly lies with me. I need fixing. Can you help?”

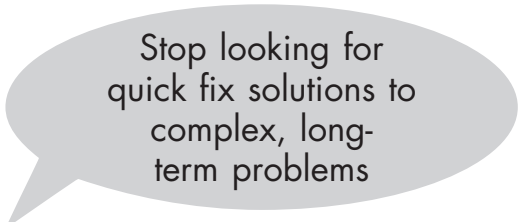
Wow. I’d only asked her how she was.

Clare had a very black and white view of life – perhaps more so than most of us. But she fell into a trap I believe many of us can fall into.

Believing people can be fixed.

Such people believe there must be a formula. A cure. Some instant solution that will remedy their problem, either with themselves or someone else.

Bite Size Wisdom



Stop looking for quick fix solutions to complex, long-term problems

Well in case you hadn’t noticed, people are not machines. A car or a computer may need a faulty part replacing before it’s functioning again, but people are a little more complex. And as soon as you start looking to “fix” people or “fix” yourself you’re in trouble.

The problem is we're so used to getting "things" fixed we start believing we can also do the same with people.

The reality is very different.

If you've got trouble with your phone, you can ring a helpline and follow the step-by-step instructions on how to resolve it. Voila. Before you know it your problem is sorted. Carefully follow the instructions on how to erect your flat-pack furniture and before your very eyes emerges your own TV stand with matching set of tables (although to be fair the ones I build end up looking more like a double wardrobe).

But there are no instruction manuals when it comes to dealing with people. Religions may lay out guidelines and principles to live by, but not step-by-step instructions. If there were such a manual it would have to be a very thick one.

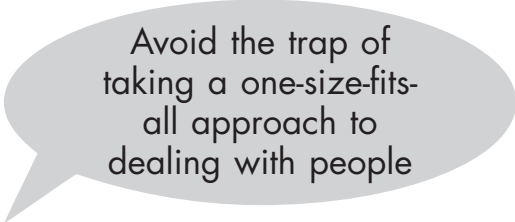
Why?

We're complex. We're inconsistent. We react differently to the same event depending on our mood at that particular moment.

When we interact with others there can be a clash of cultures, egos and personalities.

The reality is you cannot treat everybody the same and expect the same outcome. Life, I'm afraid, is just not like that.

Bite Size Wisdom



Avoid the trap of taking a one-size-fits-all approach to dealing with people

So stop looking to fix people. Stop searching for that magical three-point plan that is guaranteed to resolve all your issues. Plenty of writers and speakers promise such solutions.

I believe they're wrong.

Ideas, insights and principles are great.

Suggestions can be helpful.

Techniques may enhance your chances of success.

But let's not kid ourselves that results are guaranteed.

We're dealing with people.

Not motor cars or mobile devices.

So take time to explore lots of ideas in this book that will help you, but let's not fool ourselves that simple solutions exist for everyone's problem.

They don't.

And people cannot be fixed.

Helped? Absolutely.

Encouraged to see things differently? Possibly.

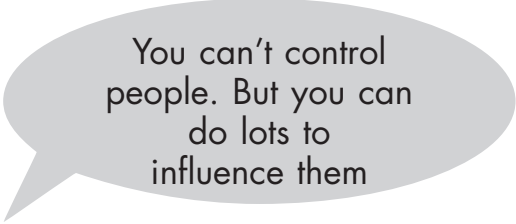
Motivated? Maybe.

Engaged? Perhaps.

Understood more than they currently are? Definitely.

The good news is we can significantly increase our chances of doing all of the above, but never forget this:

Bite Size Wisdom



You can't control
people. But you can
do lots to
influence them

Oh, and one other thing. They'll never be as straightforward as machines.

Ever.

