

EMOTIONAL BUTTONS

By Julie Fuimano, Executive Coach

We've all done it. You become upset by something someone does and you blame him or her for doing it "to" you. I mean, it's their fault. They should know better, right? People should know what sets you off. Don't you agree?



The fact is that people don't know how to treat you unless you tell them. They don't know your emotional buttons and they're not responsible for pushing them. You are responsible for maintaining your own emotional buttons or for eliminating them.

Your anger or disappointment - whatever you're feeling - is bringing your attention to something. Feelings are your inner messengers. They're a form of intelligence. Your feelings are not about the other person or what they did; they're about you. They let you know that something is not quite right and they require your attention. People are who they are. They behave, as they know how to behave. When you become upset, there is an opportunity for you to explore yourself and what that means for you. You can identify your truth, heal something from your past if need be, and then speak your truth by asking for what you need.

You demonstrate and teach others how to treat you by how you treat yourself. How you treat yourself and what you allow others to do in your presence sends a message. If, for example, you do something for someone and they do not thank you, you may feel taken advantage of. You may feel like they did not appreciate your efforts. If you say nothing or do nothing to share your feelings and your expectations to the person, then they will not know their behavior was not acceptable to you and they are likely to repeat it. By saying something to the person, you let them know how to treat you respectfully and you will continue to build a good relationship with this individual. By saying nothing, you also send a message to your inner self that, in essence, translates to, "Your feelings are not important." This is very damaging to your own self-esteem.

In fact, if you identify the behavior that was bothersome, and you share this with the other person, it's possible that they will be grateful. People often don't know or pay attention to how their behavior impacts others. By sharing your feelings with them and asking them to treat you a certain way, you honor yourself and you honor them by offering them the opportunity to be a better person. It is also possible they will not change. This may very well be who they are and how they like to be. Do not judge them. They have the right to be who they are and you don't have to like it. If you find their behavior unacceptable or distasteful, then you have a choice to not be with them. Find people who appreciate you and who are willing to respect you and treat you the way you want to be treated.

So often people think they do not have a choice. There is always a choice.

There are two things to know about buttons. The first is that you are responsible for your buttons. Eliminate them and no one can ever get to you in this way again. The second is that if you are working on your buttons and someone in your life continues to push them, then it begs the question, why are you choosing to be with this person? Respect is a major part of any relationship and if this person cannot be compassionate, understanding, and demonstrate respect towards you, then why are they in your life? If it's your boss, you may need to find other work depending upon the situation. If it's your spouse, then don't just put up with it; deal with this directly by learning more masterful communication techniques. Pushing someone's buttons, making them upset, is not a loving thing to do.

Discovering your buttons and eliminating them is a wonderful gift you give to yourself. It's very freeing to be beyond your ability to get upset.



Julie Fuimano, MBA, BSN, RN is an Executive Coach working with leaders to be more emotionally intelligent and masterful communicators so they can better navigate through a sea of politics, assess and diagnose difficult situations, and deal with conflict gracefully. She facilitates groups to help build high performance teams that align behaviors with the organizational vision and values, cultivate cultures of excellence and positively impact the bottom line. Julie is the author of "The Journey Called YOU: A Roadmap to Self-Discovery and Acceptance," the manual for personal leadership and is available for speaking engagements. For more information, contact her at Julie@phillyfitmagazine.com