

3 steps to accepting a person with lower socio-emotional skill than you would like

1. **Accept the reality of them today:** Face and acknowledge their current level of functioning in life. This does not mean resigning to something for the long term. But it is to acknowledge their limited thinking, their inability to attune to your experience, their inability to regulate certain emotions, and their difficulty with communicating clearly and calmly when something distresses them. You don't need to like it or want it, but don't waste your life force resisting how they are. This is their functioning level today. When you are more aligned with reality, you will be more intellectually and emotionally resourced to act in ways that are best for the over-all situation.
2. **Work with Barriers to Acceptance:** Ask yourself: "What makes it hard for me to accept their lower skill level?" Some common thoughts that make it hard to accept the person are:
 - a. *"They should be more emotionally mature."* Most people are actually doing the best they can in a given moment. Your current emotional intelligence skill is likely much higher than theirs. They don't see reality through your lens. Many need to grieve that their parent, spouse, relative etc... is not ever going to be the person that you hope they would be.
 - b. *"They are so competent in others areas of life, they should also be good at adult emotional intelligence."* Just because they are smart in areas like dealing with medical issues, party planning, athletics, stocks, cooking, running a household, their work, children's emotional needs etc..., doesn't mean they are good at adult attunement and navigating difficult adult emotions and conversations. People can be quite skilled in intellectual pursuits, physical agility, creativity, logistics, medical care, historical knowledge, and they can simultaneously be poor at socio-emotional intelligence.
 - c. *"They are so convincing that they are right and I am wrong."* This denial of your reality makes you have self-doubt and it can hurt to not be known by someone you care for. Just because they think they are being appropriate with you and life; doesn't mean they are.
 - d. *"They seemed better before; they should still be that way."* You might be seeing them more clearly now, or they are less skilled with the demands at this age. Go ahead and grieve the version of them that you've lost. It sucks.
 - e. *"That is too much to accept. I can't live like this."* Acceptance of this moment, doesn't mean resigning yourself to this for life. Accepting how it is today, can calm your physiology and you have more resources to deal.
 - f. *"I deserve better. This is unfair."* Life is unfair, and many got dealt a hand much worse than this. No one is exempt from life's pain. I know it sucks for you, but it can also be helpful to know it's normal, you are not alone, and it's great it's not even worse than this.
 - g. *"Since they don't get me, and are so mis-attuned to who I am what I need, they are a horrible person."* They are a complex human being with many good parts and they just have low skill in an area that is very important to you. You are not alone in this experience. Big hugs.
 - h. *"They are doing it on purpose and taking advantage of me."* Most people are either triggered or overall, they are actually trying their best. They were likely not attuned to by their parents, so they never learned it, and they are actually struggling underneath even if they don't admit it to themselves.

3. **See the positive in them:** Make a list of their positive qualities, things they have done for you, harmful choices that they abstain from, and things you value about their way of being. Some examples to get you thinking are...

- a. They keep you in mind, you matter to them, they care about you
- b. They would be there in an emergency, and care if you are physically hurt
- c. They have put a lot of themselves into you
- d. They make you feel like you belong
- e. They provide companionship and it's really nice to not feel lonely
- f. They want to connect on holidays
- g. They have made sacrifices for you
- h. They have done many things for you
- i. They have tried to be good to you
- j. They foster certain relationships that help you
- k. They are alive
- l. They are fun at times
- m. They gave me life. It's pretty cool I get to be on this planet at all
- n. They gave me siblings
- o. They paid for many things for me
- p. We can reminisce, someone knows and cares to track my life as it unfolds
- q. Negative things that they may abstain from are... They are not in jail, not on drugs, not stealing from you, they are not touching your children inappropriately, they are not financially dependent on you,