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The Acho Group

## Choose Empathy, and Let the Healing Begin

Unprecedented disengagement at workplaces. Companies failing to innovate. Broken and uncivilized political discourse. Are these things related? What's at the core of these challenges facing us today?

If you sometimes feel distracted at work, disconnected from your home life, and overwhelmed by the news, you're not alone. You may be suffering because of our societal Empathy Deficit Disorder (EDD).

That's the revelation of "Empathy Deficit Disorder: Healing from Our Mix-ups About Work, Home, and Sex," a new book by Jacqueline Acho, Ph.D., and her co-author, Eva Vasiliades Basilion.

Jackie explains, "EDD is a kind of disease we feel as a society and as individuals. When our natural empathy is depleted, people don't feel connected and understood. It hurts us all—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We see signs of this disease everywhere, from political divisions to the tone of conversation in the media to the fact that work organizations are painful places for a lot of people."

### Healing from Our Mix-Ups

The first half of the book clears up three commonly held mix-ups that are not serving us. Jackie says, "We redefine leadership as co-creative rather than the lonely guy at the top of a pointy pyramid. We challenge the notion that we need only a small amount of quality time at home while spending large quantities of time at work. Finally, we make the case for why caring is not just women's work." The second half of the book paints a new vision for bringing work and home together in unprecedented ways, a big benefit of today's technology.

### Recovering and Stewarding a Currency of Empathy®

Jackie knows that individuals can remember empathy, because she did it herself. "The credit goes to my kids! Research shows that hands-on parenting increases empathy in the brain." By the time she had kids, Jackie had earned a Ph.D. in chemistry from MIT and was a partner with a corner office in the global management consulting firm, McKinsey & Company. Like all working parents, she struggled to have enough time at home. The payoff of

#### The Consequences of Empathy Deficit Disorder

70 percent of employees report feeling disengaged at work

Rises in reported anxiety and clinical depression among adults and children

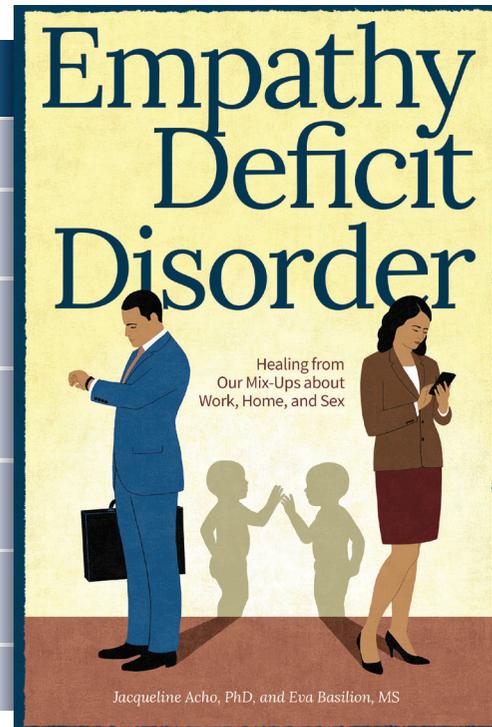
A dearth of women in leadership roles, 50 years after second-wave feminism

Leaders being indicted for serious crimes, from manipulating our data to mass environmental poisoning

White men in the U.S. being the first demographic in world history to have increasing mortality

Millennials opting not to have children, putting the U.S. fertility rate at a 30-year low

Alarming environmental toxicity and increasing natural disasters



making time to care was empathy, which is becoming recognized as a superpower for leaders. "Just as you can't think your way into six-pack abs, no amount of empathy training at work can match caring for people in real life. Empathy is a contact sport, especially the affective, or emotional, part. It takes time."

Jackie also knows organizations can support people by stewarding a Currency of Empathy. "It's simple but not easy. Common business practices thwart empathy. They don't feed our sense of meaning, help us grow, or make space for us to live whole lives," Jackie explains. Organizations that address those issues help steward institutional empathy, which drives success because it supports innovation, increases engagement, and allows people to be happier and better, at home and at work. "That's what we really want," says Jackie. "We're human, after all."

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### Praise for Empathy Deficit Disorder

For those who are sick of the cynical zeitgeist, I can't recommend this book strongly enough. The revolution of the future will hinge on the empathy-inducing 'co-creation,' explained so masterfully and entertainingly in these pages.

Detective Chris Gibbons  
Cleveland Police Department

The book will cause you to self-examine. It will provoke you to think and think again. It will drive you to be your sister's keeper, and your brother's, and your neighbor's, too.

Harold V. Jones  
Executive Vice President of Eaton  
Business System & Sustainability,  
Eaton Corporation