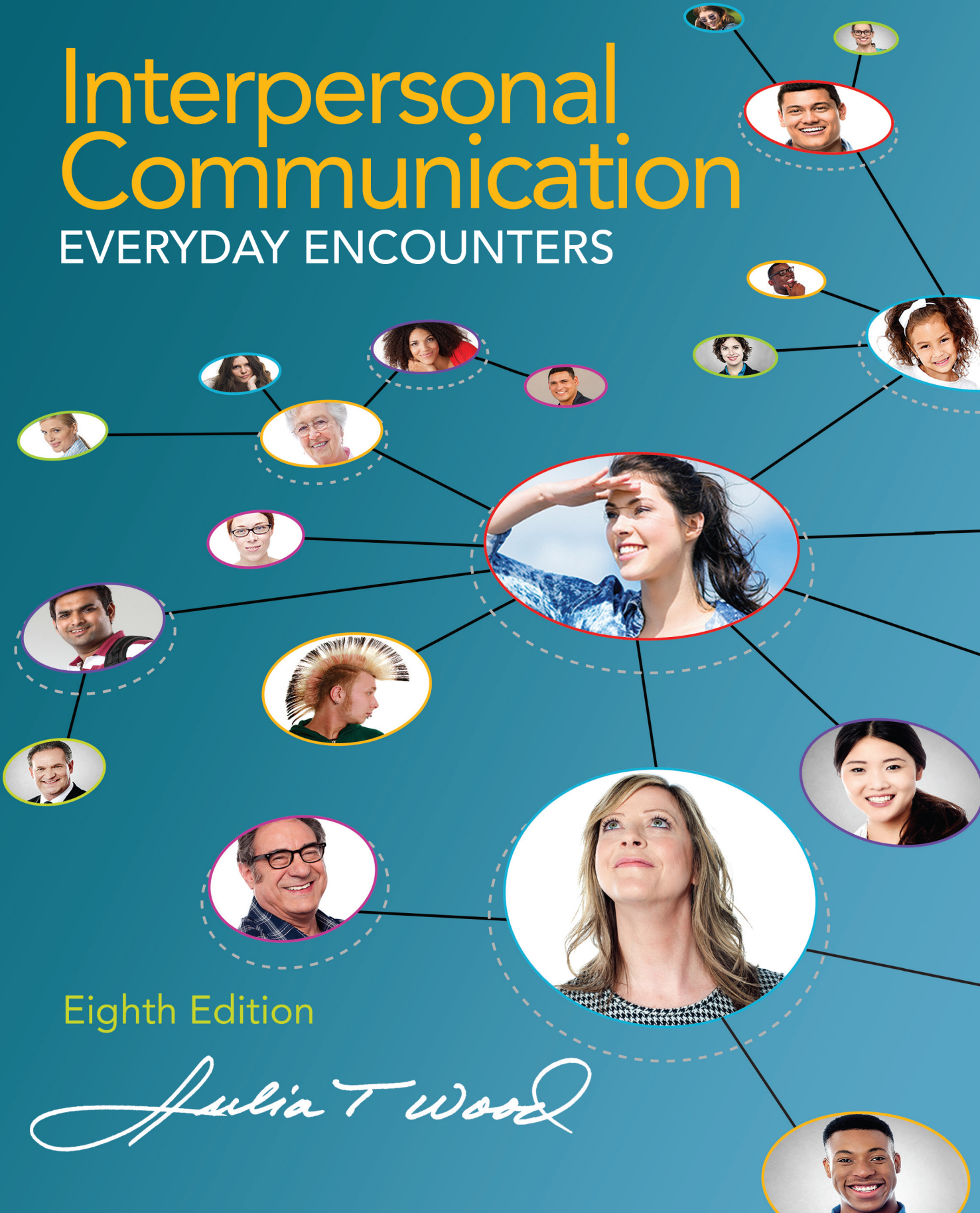


Interpersonal Communication

EVERYDAY ENCOUNTERS



Eighth Edition

Julia T Wood



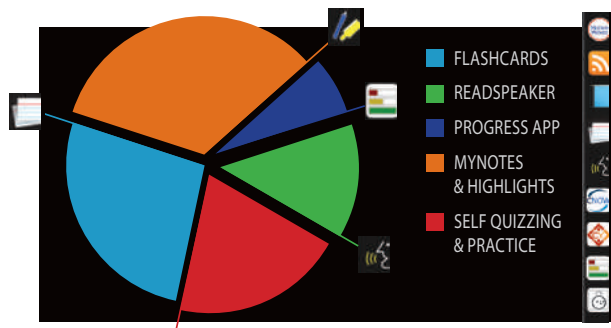
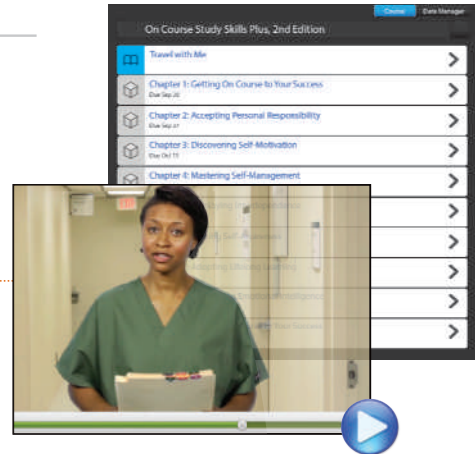
Tap into engagement

MindTap empowers you to produce your best work—consistently.

MindTap is designed to help you master the material. Interactive videos, animations, and activities create a learning path designed by your instructor to guide you through the course and focus on what's important.

MindTap delivers real-world activities and assignments

that will help you in your academic life as well as your career.



MindTap helps you stay organized and efficient

by giving you the study tools to master the material.

MindTap empowers and motivates

with information that shows where you stand at all times—both individually and compared to the highest performers in class.

“MindTap was very useful – it was easy to follow and everything was right there.”

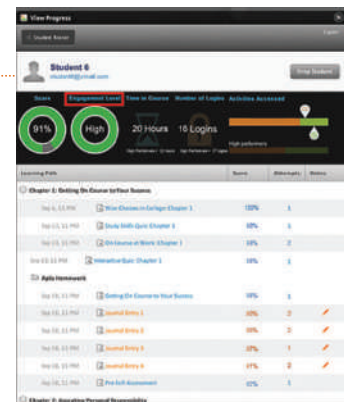
— Student, San Jose State University

“I’m definitely more engaged because of MindTap.”

— Student, University of Central Florida

“MindTap puts practice questions in a format that works well for me.”

— Student, Franciscan University of Steubenville



Tap into more info at: www.cengage.com/mindtap

Source Code: 14M-AA0105

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal Communication

edition

8

Everyday Encounters

Julia T. Wood

*Lineberger Distinguished Professor of Humanities Emerita
Caroline H. and Thomas S. Royster Distinguished
Professor of Graduate Education Emerita*

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL



Australia • Brazil • Japan • Korea • Mexico • Singapore • Spain • United Kingdom • United States

This is an electronic version of the print textbook. Due to electronic rights restrictions, some third party content may be suppressed. Editorial review has deemed that any suppressed content does not materially affect the overall learning experience. The publisher reserves the right to remove content from this title at any time if subsequent rights restrictions require it. For valuable information on pricing, previous editions, changes to current editions, and alternate formats, please visit www.cengage.com/highered to search by ISBN#, author, title, or keyword for materials in your areas of interest.

Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters, Eighth Edition
Julia T. Wood

Product Director: Monica Eckman
Senior Product Manager: Nicole Morinon
Senior Content Developer:
Sue Gleason Wade
Senior Media Developer: Jessica Badiner
Associate Content Developer:
Karolina Kiwak
Product Assistant: Colin Solan
Marketing Director: Stacey Purviance
Content Project Manager: Dan Saabye
Art Director: Linda May
Manufacturing Planner: Doug Bertke
IP Analyst: Ann Hoffman
IP Project Manager: Farah Fard
Production Service: Lumina Datamatics, Inc.
Text and Cover Designer: Rokusek Design
Cover Image: All Cover Photos by
Shutterstock
Compositor: Lumina Datamatics, Inc.

© 2016, 2013, 2010 Cengage Learning

WCN: 02-200-203

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this work covered by the copyright herein may be reproduced, transmitted, stored, or used in any form or by any means graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including but not limited to photocopying, recording, scanning, digitizing, taping, web distribution, information networks, or information storage and retrieval systems, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

For product information and technology assistance, contact us at
Cengage Learning Customer & Sales Support, 1-800-354-9706

For permission to use material from this text or product,
submit all requests online at **www.cengage.com/permissions**.

Further permissions questions can be emailed to
permissionrequest@cengage.com.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014938884

ISBN-13: 978-1-285-44583-0

Cengage Learning

20 Channel Center Street
Boston, MA 02210
USA

Cengage Learning is a leading provider of customized learning solutions with office locations around the globe, including Singapore, the United Kingdom, Australia, Mexico, Brazil and Japan. Locate your local office at **international.cengage.com/region**.

Cengage Learning products are represented in Canada by
Nelson Education, Ltd.

For your course and learning solutions, visit **www.cengage.com**.

Purchase any of our products at your local college store or at our preferred online store **www.cengagebrain.com**.

Instructors: Please visit **login.cengage.com** and log in to access instructor-specific resources.

For my niece, Michelle, whose wit, imagination, and daring inspire me

BRIEF CONTENTS

Contents	vii
Communication in Everyday Life	xvi
Preface	xvii
Introduction	1

PART ONE The Fabric of Interpersonal Communication

chapter ONE A FIRST LOOK AT INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION	9
chapter TWO COMMUNICATION AND PERSONAL IDENTITY	44
chapter THREE PERCEPTION AND COMMUNICATION	73
chapter FOUR THE WORLD OF WORDS	103
chapter FIVE THE WORLD BEYOND WORDS	133
chapter SIX MINDFUL LISTENING	161

PART TWO Weaving Communication into Relationships

chapter SEVEN EMOTIONS AND COMMUNICATION	189
chapter EIGHT COMMUNICATION CLIMATE: THE FOUNDATION OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS	217
chapter NINE MANAGING CONFLICT IN RELATIONSHIPS	246
chapter TEN FRIENDSHIPS IN OUR LIVES	281
chapter ELEVEN COMMITTED ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS	307
chapter TWELVE COMMUNICATION IN FAMILIES	334
<i>Epilogue: Continuing the Conversation</i>	361
<i>Glossary</i>	365
<i>References</i>	371
<i>Index</i>	397

CONTENTS

<i>Communication in Everyday Life</i>	xvi	Participating Effectively in a Diverse Society	27
<i>Preface</i>	xvii	<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity: Communicating in a Multicultural World</i>	28
<i>Introduction</i>	1		
PART ONE The Fabric of Interpersonal Communication			
chapter ONE			
A FIRST LOOK AT INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION 9			
DEFINING INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION 11			
A Communication Continuum	12	Principle 1: We Cannot <i>Not</i> Communicate	28
<i>Communication in Everyday Life— Workplace: Diagnosis: Cultural Miscommunication</i>	12	Principle 2: Interpersonal Communication Is Irreversible	29
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Insight: Poor Interpersonal Communication as the Number One Cause of Divorce</i>	13	Principle 3: Interpersonal Communication Involves Ethical Choices	29
Features of Interpersonal Communication	14	Principle 4: People Construct Meanings in Interpersonal Communication	30
MODELS OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION 19			
Linear Models	20	Principle 5: Metacommunication Affects Meanings	30
Interactive Models	21	Principle 6: Interpersonal Communication Develops and Sustains Relationships	32
Transactional Models	21	Principle 7: Interpersonal Communication Is Not a Panacea	33
The Interpersonal Imperative	22	Principle 8: Interpersonal Communication Effectiveness Can Be Learned	33
Physical Needs	22		
Safety Needs	23	SOCIAL MEDIA IN EVERYDAY LIFE 33	
Belonging Needs	24	GUIDELINES FOR INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE 35	
<i>Communication in Everyday Life— Social Media: Social Networking on the Job</i>	24	Develop a Range of Skills	35
Self-Esteem Needs	25	Adapt Communication Appropriately	35
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity: Missing Socialization</i>	25	Engage in Dual Perspective	36
Self-Actualization Needs	26	Monitor Your Communication	38
		Commit to Ethical Communication	38
		<i>Chapter Summary</i>	39
		<i>Key Concepts</i>	40
		<i>Continuing the Conversation</i>	40
		<i>Assessing Yourself</i>	40
		<i>Everyday Skills</i>	41
		<i>Engaging with Ideas</i>	43
		<i>Thinking Critically</i>	43

chapter TWO

COMMUNICATION AND PERSONAL IDENTITY 44

*Communication in Everyday Life—Social Media:
Wonderful Me* 46

WHAT IS THE SELF? 46

The Self Arises in Communication with Others 46

Particular Others 47

*Communication in Everyday Life—Workplace:
A New Job for Dad* 49

The Generalized Other 54

*Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity:
What Does Learning Mean?* 55

*Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity:
David and Brenda* 57

PRESENTING AND NEGOTIATING IDENTITY 59

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PERSONAL IDENTITY 61

GUIDELINES FOR ENRICHING THE SELF 62

Make a Firm Commitment to Personal Growth 62

Gain and Use Knowledge to Support Personal Growth 62

Self-Disclose when Appropriate 64

Set Goals That Are Realistic and Fair 65

Seek Contexts That Support Personal Change 67

Chapter Summary 68

Key Concepts 69

Continuing the Conversation 69

Assessing Yourself 70

Your Form 70

Form for Person Who Knows You Well 70

Everyday Skills 71

Engaging with Ideas 72

Thinking Critically 72

chapter THREE

PERCEPTION AND COMMUNICATION 73

THE PROCESS OF HUMAN PERCEPTION 75

Selection 75

*Communication in Everyday Life—Social Media:
Inattention Blindness* 76

Organization 77

*Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity:
Which Line is Longer?* 77

*Communication in Everyday Life—Workplace:
Racial Stereotypes in the Workplace* 80

*Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity:
“I Can’t Understand the Teacher’s Accent.”* 81

Interpretation 81

*Communication in Everyday Life—Insight:
Thinking Your Way to a Good Relationship* 84

INFLUENCES ON PERCEPTION 84

Physiology 84

Expectations 85

Age 85

Culture 86

Cognitive Abilities 88

Self 90

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PERCEPTION 90

GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING PERCEPTION AND COMMUNICATION 91

Recognize That All Perceptions Are Partial and Subjective 92

Avoid Mind Reading 92

Check Perceptions with Others 93

Distinguish between Facts and Inferences 94

Guard against the Self-Serving Bias 94

Guard against the Fundamental Attribution Error 95

Monitor Labels 95

<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Insight: The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth</i>	97
Chapter Summary	98
Key Concepts	99
Continuing the Conversation	99
Everyday Skills	99
Engaging with Ideas	101
Thinking Critically	102

chapter **FOUR** THE WORLD OF WORDS **103**

THE SYMBOLIC NATURE OF LANGUAGE **105**

Symbols Are Arbitrary	105
Symbols Are Ambiguous	106
Symbols Are Abstract	107

PRINCIPLES OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION **107**

Language and Culture Reflect Each Other	108
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Social Media: Google ‘R’ Us</i>	108
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity: Our Multicultural Language</i>	109
The Meanings of Language Are Subjective	109
Language Use Is Rule-Guided	110
Punctuation Shapes Meaning	111

SYMBOLIC ABILITIES **112**

Language Defines Phenomena	112
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity: Everything Has a Name!</i>	113
Language Evaluates	114
Language Organizes Perceptions	116
Language Allows Hypothetical Thought	117
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Workplace: Police Have New Tool for Detecting Lies</i>	118
Language Allows Self-Reflection	118

SPEECH COMMUNITIES **119**

Gendered Speech Communities	120
Social Media and Verbal Communication	123

GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING VERBAL COMMUNICATION **123**

Engage in Dual Perspective	123
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Social Media: Urban Dictionary in the Courtroom</i>	123
Own Your Feelings and Thoughts	124
Respect What Others Say about Their Feelings and Thoughts	126
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity: Respecting Others’ Experiences</i>	126
Strive for Accuracy and Clarity	127
Chapter Summary	128
Key Concepts	129
Continuing the Conversation	129
Assessing Yourself	130
Everyday Skills	130
Engaging with Ideas	132
Thinking Critically	132

chapter **FIVE** THE WORLD BEYOND WORDS **133**

DEFINING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION **135**

Similarities between Verbal and Nonverbal Communication	135
Differences between Verbal and Nonverbal Communication	137

PRINCIPLES OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION **138**

Nonverbal Communication May Supplement or Replace Verbal Communication	138
Nonverbal Communication May Regulate Interaction	138
Nonverbal Communication Often Establishes Relationship-Level Meanings	139

<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Social Media: FoMo</i>	139
Nonverbal Communication Reflects and Expresses Cultural Values	141
TYPES OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION 143	
Kinesics	143
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Workplace: Cultural Differences in Workplace Nonverbal Communication</i>	143
Haptics	144
Physical Appearance	145
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Insight: Kiss = 6.4 Calories</i>	145
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Insight: Beauty for Sale</i>	146
Artifacts	147
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity: Kwanzaa</i>	148
Environmental Factors	148
Proxemics and Personal Space	149
Chronemics	150
Paralanguage	150
Silence	151
SOCIAL MEDIA AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION 152	
GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION 153	
Monitor Your Nonverbal Communication	153
Interpret Others' Nonverbal Communication Tentatively	153
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity: Policing a Multicultural Society</i>	154
Chapter Summary	156
Key Concepts	156
Continuing the Conversation	157
Assessing Yourself	157
Everyday Skills	158
Engaging with Ideas	159
Thinking Critically	160

chapter SIX	
MINDFUL LISTENING 161	
THE LISTENING PROCESS 163	
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Workplace: Good Listening = Career Advancement</i>	163
Mindfulness	164
Physically Receiving Messages	164
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Social Media: The Illusion of Competence</i>	165
Selecting and Organizing Material	166
Interpreting Communication	166
Responding	167
Remembering	167
OBSTACLES TO MINDFUL LISTENING 168	
External Obstacles	168
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Social Media: Technological Overload</i>	169
Internal Obstacles	170
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Workplace: Cookbook Medicine</i>	171
FORMS OF NONLISTENING 173	
Pseudolistening	173
Monopolizing	174
Selective Listening	175
Defensive Listening	175
Ambushing	176
Literal Listening	176
ADAPTING LISTENING TO COMMUNICATION GOALS 177	
Listening for Pleasure	177
Listening for Information	177
Listening to Support Others	179
SOCIAL MEDIA AND LISTENING 181	
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Insight: Listener of the Year</i>	181

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE LISTENING	182
Be Mindful	182
Adapt Listening Appropriately	182
Listen Actively	183
Chapter Summary	183
Key Concepts	184
Continuing the Conversation	184
Everyday Skills	185
Engaging with Ideas	187
Thinking Critically	187

PART TWO Weaving Communication into Relationships

chapter **SEVEN**

EMOTIONS AND COMMUNICATION 189

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE 191

Communication in Everyday Life–Workplace: EQ and Career Advancement	192
---	-----

UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS 193

Communication in Everyday Life–Social Media: The Dragonfly Effect	194
Physiological Influences on Emotions	194
Perceptual Influences on Emotions	194
Cultural Influences on Emotions	196
Communication in Everyday Life–Diversity: The Social Shaping of Grief	197

OBSTACLES TO COMMUNICATING EMOTIONS EFFECTIVELY 200

Reasons We May Not Express Emotions	201
Communication in Everyday Life–Diversity: Sugar and Spice and Bullying!	202
The Ineffective Expression of Emotions	204
Communication in Everyday Life–Workplace: EQ on the Job	204

Communication in Everyday Life–Workplace: What the ##### Is Going On at This **@#!!! Company?	205
---	-----

SOCIAL MEDIA AND EMOTIONS 206

GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATING EMOTIONS EFFECTIVELY 207

Identify Your Emotions	207
Choose Whether and How to Express Emotions	208
Own Your Feelings	209
Monitor Your Self-Talk	209
Adopt a Rational-Emotive Approach to Feelings	210
Respond Sensitively When Others Communicate Emotions	211
Chapter Summary	212
Key Concepts	212
Continuing the Conversation	213
Assessing Yourself	214
Everyday Skills	215
Engaging with Ideas	216
Thinking Critically	216

chapter **EIGHT**

COMMUNICATION CLIMATE: THE FOUNDATION OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS 217

FEATURES OF SATISFYING RELATIONSHIPS 219

Investment	220
Commitment	220
Trust	221
Communication in Everyday Life–Insight: What Keeps Relationships Together?	221
Comfort with Relational Dialectics	223
Communication in Everyday Life–Diversity: Dialogue and Doing: Alternate Paths to Closeness	225

CONFIRMING AND DISCONFIRMING CLIMATES 226

Levels of Confirmation and Disconfirmation 227

Confirming and Disconfirming Communication 229

Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity: Guidelines for Confirming Communication with People with Disabilities 230

Communication in Everyday Life—Social Media: Online Support 231

Communication in Everyday Life—Workplace: Scolding Doesn't Motivate 232

Communication in Everyday Life—Workplace: Mentoring Relationships 234

SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION CLIMATE 235

GUIDELINES FOR CREATING AND SUSTAINING CONFIRMING CLIMATES 236

Actively Use Communication to Build Confirming Climates 236

Accept and Confirm Others 236

Affirm and Assert Yourself 237

Respect Diversity in Relationships 238

Respond Constructively to Criticism 239

Chapter Summary 240

Key Concepts 241

Continuing the Conversation 241

Everyday Skills 242

Engaging with Ideas 245

Thinking Critically 245

chapter **NINE**
MANAGING CONFLICT IN RELATIONSHIPS 246

DEFINING INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT 250

Expressed Tension 250

Interdependence 250

Perceived Incompatible Goals 251

The Felt Need for Resolution 251

PRINCIPLES OF CONFLICT 251

Principle 1: Conflict Is Natural in Most Western Relationships 251

Principle 2: Conflict May Be Expressed Overtly or Covertly 252

Principle 3: Social Groups Shape the Meaning of Conflict Behaviors 254

Principle 4: Conflict Can Be Managed Well or Poorly 256

Principle 5: Conflict Can Be Good for Individuals and Relationships 256

ORIENTATIONS TO CONFLICT 257

Lose-Lose 257

Win-Lose 258

Win-Win 259

Communication in Everyday Life—Workplace: Japanese and American Styles of Negotiation 259

RESPONSES TO CONFLICT 260

The Exit Response 260

The Neglect Response 261

The Loyalty Response 261

The Voice Response 261

COMMUNICATION PATTERNS DURING CONFLICT 262

Unproductive Conflict Communication 262

Constructive Conflict Communication 264

Conflict Management Skills 267

Communication in Everyday Life—Workplace: Conflict in the Workplace 269

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CONFLICT 270

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION DURING CONFLICT 271

Focus on the Overall Communication System 271

<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Social Media: Using Social Media to Reduce Conflict</i>	271	External Pressures	295
Time Conflict Purposefully	272	<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity: Friendships across the Life Span</i>	295
Aim for Win-Win Conflict	273	SOCIAL MEDIA AND FRIENDSHIPS	297
Honor Yourself, Your Partner, and the Relationship	274	<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Social Media: Cyberbullying</i>	298
Show Grace When Appropriate	274	GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN FRIENDS	298
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Insight: The Communication of Forgiveness</i>	275	Engage in Dual Perspective	299
Chapter Summary	276	Communicate Honestly	299
Key Concepts	276	Grow from Differences	300
<i>Continuing the Conversation</i>	277	Don't Sweat the Small Stuff	301
<i>Assessing Yourself</i>	278	<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity: "I've held you in my heart"</i>	301
<i>Everyday Skills</i>	279	Chapter Summary	302
<i>Engaging with Ideas</i>	280	Key Concepts	302
<i>Thinking Critically</i>	280	<i>Continuing the Conversation</i>	302
		<i>Assessing Yourself</i>	303
		<i>Everyday Skills</i>	304
		<i>Engaging with Ideas</i>	305
		<i>Thinking Critically</i>	306
chapter TEN		chapter ELEVEN	
FRIENDSHIPS IN OUR LIVES	281	COMMITTED ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS	307
THE NATURE OF FRIENDSHIP	283	COMMITTED ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS	309
Willingness to Invest	283	Dimensions of Romantic Relationships	309
Emotional Closeness	283	Styles of Loving	311
Acceptance	286	THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS	314
Trust	286	Growth	315
Support	287	<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity: Development of Interracial Relationships</i>	316
THE DEVELOPMENT OF FRIENDSHIP	289	<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Insight: Valentine's Day</i>	318
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Workplace: Workplace Friendships</i>	289		
Growth Stages	290		
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity: Friendships around the World</i>	292		
Deterioration Stages	292		
PRESSURES ON FRIENDSHIPS	293		
Internal Tensions	293		
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Insight: Just Friends?</i>	294		

Navigation	319	<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Insight: Voluntary Kin</i>	339
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Workplace: Workplace Romance</i>	320	Cultural Diversity of Family Forms	341
Deterioration	321	Diverse Family Types	341
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Insight: Ambiguous Loss</i>	321	<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Workplace: Breadwinning—Increasingly a Shared Responsibility</i>	341
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Social Media: Cybermemorials</i>	322	COMMUNICATION IN FAMILIES	342
SOCIAL MEDIA AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS	323	Elements in Family Communication	342
GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATING IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS	324	<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Diversity: Love Languages</i>	343
Engage in Dual Perspective	324	Communication Patterns	344
Practice Safe Sex	325	THE FAMILY LIFE CYCLE	345
<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Insight: Facts about Sexually Transmitted Diseases</i>	325	<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Insight: Difficult Dialogues</i>	345
Manage Conflict Constructively	327	Stage 1: Establishing a Family	346
Adapt Communication to Maintain Long-Distance Relationships	329	Stage 2: Enlarging a Family	346
<i>Chapter Summary</i>	330	Stage 3: Developing a Family	347
<i>Key Concepts</i>	330	Stage 4: Encouraging Independence	348
<i>Continuing the Conversation</i>	330	Stage 5: Launching Children	348
<i>Assessing Yourself</i>	331	Stage 6: Postlaunching of Children	349
<i>Everyday Skills</i>	332	Stage 7: Retirement	350
<i>Engaging with Ideas</i>	333	<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Social Media: Connecting Generations</i>	350
<i>Thinking Critically</i>	333	SOCIAL MEDIA AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION	351
 		GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN FAMILIES	352
 		Maintain Equity in Family Relationships	352
chapter TWELVE	334	<i>Communication in Everyday Life—Workplace: The Second Shift</i>	353
COMMUNICATION IN FAMILIES		Make Daily Choices That Enhance Intimacy	354
DIVERSITY IN FAMILY LIFE	336	Show Respect and Consideration	355
Diverse Forms of Families	337	Don't Sweat the Small Stuff	355
Diverse Goals for Families	339		

<i>Chapter Summary</i>	356	<i>Thinking Critically</i>	360
<i>Key Concepts</i>	357	<i>Epilogue: Continuing the Conversation</i>	361
<i>Continuing the Conversation</i>	357	<i>Glossary</i>	365
<i>Everyday Skills</i>	359	<i>References</i>	371
<i>Engaging with Ideas</i>	359	<i>Index</i>	397

COMMUNICATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE

DIVERSITY

<i>Missing Socialization (Ch. 1)</i>	25
<i>Communicating in a Multicultural World (Ch. 1)</i>	28
<i>What Does Learning Mean? (Ch. 2)</i>	55
<i>David and Brenda (Ch. 2)</i>	57
<i>Which Line is Longer? (Ch. 3)</i>	77
<i>"I Can't Understand the Teacher's Accent." (Ch. 3)</i>	81
<i>Our Multicultural Language (Ch. 4)</i>	109
<i>Everything Has a Name! (Ch. 4)</i>	113
<i>Respecting Others' Experiences (Ch. 4)</i>	126
<i>Kwanzaa (Ch. 5)</i>	148
<i>Policing a Multicultural Society (Ch. 5)</i>	154
<i>The Social Shaping of Grief (Ch. 7)</i>	197
<i>Sugar and Spice and Bullying! (Ch. 7)</i>	202
<i>Dialogue and Doing: Alternate Paths to Closeness (Ch. 8)</i>	225
<i>Guidelines for Confirming Communication with People with Disabilities (Ch. 8)</i>	230
<i>Friendships around the World (Ch. 10)</i>	292
<i>Friendships across the Life Span (Ch. 10)</i>	295
<i>"I've held you in my heart" (Ch. 10)</i>	301
<i>Development of Interracial Relationships (Ch. 11)</i>	316
<i>Love Languages (Ch. 12)</i>	343

INSIGHT

<i>Poor Interpersonal Communication as the Number One Cause of Divorce (Ch. 1)</i>	13
<i>Thinking Your Way to a Good Relationship (Ch. 3)</i>	84
<i>The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth (Ch. 3)</i>	97
<i>Kiss = 6.4 Calories (Ch. 5)</i>	145
<i>Beauty for Sale (Ch. 5)</i>	146
<i>Listener of the Year (Ch. 6)</i>	181
<i>What Keeps Relationships Together? (Ch. 8)</i>	221
<i>The Communication of Forgiveness (Ch. 9)</i>	275
<i>Just Friends? (Ch. 10)</i>	294
<i>Valentine's Day (Ch. 11)</i>	318
<i>Ambiguous Loss (Ch. 11)</i>	321
<i>Facts about Sexually Transmitted Diseases (Ch. 11)</i>	325

<i>Voluntary Kin (Ch. 12)</i>	339
<i>Difficult Dialogues (Ch. 12)</i>	345

SOCIAL MEDIA

<i>Social Networking on the Job (Ch. 1)</i>	24
<i>Wonderful Me (Ch. 2)</i>	46
<i>Inattention Blindness (Ch. 3)</i>	76
<i>Google 'R' Us (Ch. 4)</i>	108
<i>Urban Dictionary in the Courtroom (Ch. 4)</i>	123
<i>FoMO (Ch. 5)</i>	139
<i>The Illusion of Competence (Ch. 6)</i>	165
<i>Technological Overload (Ch. 6)</i>	169
<i>The Dragonfly Effect (Ch. 7)</i>	194
<i>Online Support (Ch. 8)</i>	231
<i>Using Social Media to Reduce Conflict (Ch. 9)</i>	271
<i>Cyberbullying (Ch. 10)</i>	298
<i>Cybermemorials (Ch. 11)</i>	322
<i>Connecting Generations (Ch. 12)</i>	350

WORKPLACE

<i>Diagnosis: Cultural Miscommunication (Ch. 1)</i>	12
<i>A New Job for Dad (Ch. 2)</i>	49
<i>Racial Stereotypes in the Workplace (Ch. 3)</i>	80
<i>Police Have New Tool for Detecting Lies (Ch. 4)</i>	118
<i>Cultural Differences in Workplace Nonverbal Communication (Ch. 5)</i>	143
<i>Good Listening = Career Advancement (Ch. 6)</i>	163
<i>Cookbook Medicine (Ch. 6)</i>	171
<i>EQ and Career Advancement (Ch. 7)</i>	192
<i>EQ on the Job (Ch. 7)</i>	204
<i>What the ####!***! Is Going on at This **@@#!!! Company? (Ch. 7)</i>	205
<i>Scolding Doesn't Motivate (Ch. 8)</i>	232
<i>Mentoring Relationships (Ch. 8)</i>	234
<i>Japanese and American Styles of Negotiation (Ch. 9)</i>	259
<i>Conflict in the Workplace (Ch. 9)</i>	269
<i>Workplace Friendships (Ch. 10)</i>	289
<i>Workplace Romance (Ch. 11)</i>	320
<i>Breadwinning—Increasingly a Shared Responsibility (Ch. 12)</i>	341
<i>The Second Shift (Ch. 12)</i>	353

I wrote this book to introduce students to knowledge and skills that will allow them to live fuller, more satisfying lives than they could without competence in interpersonal communication. To achieve that goal, *Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters* is distinct in three ways. First, it gives prominence to theories, research, and practical skills from the field of communication and supplements these with scholarship from other fields. Second, this book gives strong attention to three issues that are vital in the 21st century: social diversity, social media, and workplace contexts. Finally, this book offers unique pedagogical features that encourage personal learning. Throughout the book, I encourage students to engage theory and concepts personally and to apply theoretical and practical information to their lives.

In writing this book, I've focused on communication research and theory and complemented them with work from other fields. Interpersonal communication is a well-established intellectual area, complete with a base of knowledge, theories, and research developed by communication scholars. The maturation of interpersonal communication as an intellectual discipline is evident in the substantial original research published in academic journals and scholarly books. Consistent with this scholarly growth, *Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters* features current research on communication. For example, Chapter 2 discusses communication strategies that we use to present our face and, if it's threatened, to protect it. Chapter 6, which focuses on listening, invites students to consider research showing that social media increasingly interfere with mindful, attentive listening; Chapter 11 discusses ways that social media facilitate and sometimes constrain interpersonal communication and offers information on long-distance romantic relationships, which are increasingly common. And Chapter 12 highlights family communication patterns that influence how parents and children interact and what they can talk about.

Scholarship in other fields can enhance understanding of communication. For this reason, *Interpersonal Communication: Everyday*

Encounters incorporates research from other fields. For example, research in psychology deepens our understanding of the role of attributions in interpersonal perception. Ongoing work in anthropology, sociology, philosophy, psychology, and other disciplines enriches insight into differences in communication that are influenced by gender, economic class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and race.

Attention to Significant Social Trends

Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters speaks to the context of students' lives today. I have given attention to the social trends, issues, and concerns that characterize the 21st century in Western culture.

Social Diversity The United States, like many other countries, is enriched by a cornucopia of people, heritages, customs, and ways of interacting. *Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters* reflects and addresses social diversity by weaving it into the basic fabric of interpersonal communication.

Truly incorporating diversity into this book entails more than adding an isolated chapter on the topic or tacking paragraphs about gender or race onto conventional coverage of topics. To achieve a more organic approach to diversity, I weave discussion of race, ethnicity, economic class, gender, age, religion, and sexual orientation into the book as a whole. This approach allows students to appreciate the relevance of diversity to all aspects of interpersonal communication. For example, in exploring personal identity, I examine race, gender, socioeconomic class, and sexual orientation as the core facets of identity. You'll also find numerous examples of ways in which diversity affects communication in the contemporary workplace, which is populated by people from different cultures and social communities. Chapters 4 and 5, which cover verbal and nonverbal communication, respectively, feature examples of communication in non-Western cultures. Chapter 11, on romantic relationships, discusses research on

interracial, gay, and lesbian romance; and Chapter 12, on family communication, includes research on a range of families, including ones that are not white, middle-class, and heterosexual.

To discourage stereotyped thinking about groups of people, I rely on qualifying adjectives. For instance, when citing research about differences between Hispanic and European American communication patterns, I refer to “most Hispanics” and what is “typical of European Americans.” My intent is to remind students that generalizations are limited and may not apply to every member of a group.

To further weave diversity into this book, I include “Communication in Everyday Life” features that emphasize connections between communication and diversity.

Social Media Another defining feature of our era is the pervasive presence of social media in our lives. We use e-mail and texting to stay in touch with friends and family. We join online support groups. We blog, check Facebook, Skype, text, and instant message (IM). We participate in online religious and political discussions. We meet people, make friends, network, flirt, and date—all online. As with social diversity, this topic is better covered by integrating it organically into all chapters rather than by relegating it to a separate chapter.

Every chapter in this edition includes a main section, immediately before the chapter’s summary “Guidelines for” section, in which I discuss how social media pertain to the chapter’s content. In addition, this edition includes “Communication in Everyday Life” features that highlight social media. Finally, I have integrated technology into the text itself. I suggest a number of websites and online sources for students who want to learn more about particular topics in “Communication in Everyday Life.”

Ethics Ethical issues are much in the news. We hear reports about insider trading in the stock market, politicians who take bribes, and public officials who have affairs and engage in sexting. Yet, ethical issues are not confined to the public realm. They also surface in interpersonal life; in fact, they infuse interpersonal interaction. We are frequently confronted with ethical choices: Do we tell a “white lie” when a friend asks us how we like a very expensive new hairstyle she has or do we tell her that we don’t think it’s flattering? Do we exaggerate our attractiveness when

creating our profile for an online dating site? Do we pretend to be listening when we are really not? Do we judge people from other cultures by the norms and standards of our own culture? These are just a few of the ethical considerations that arise in our everyday encounters. To underline the ethical character of interpersonal communication, I call attention to such issues both in the chapter content and in the “Thinking Critically” exercises at the end of each chapter.

Coverage of Timely Topics

Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters provides coverage of topics and issues that have increased importance in this era. There is a **full chapter on friendships**, because so many of my students tell me that friendships are essential to them in the face of the growing number of broken marriages and geographically dispersed families. Social media make it possible for friends to stay in touch with each other across distances that separate them. The chapter on romantic relationships addresses some of the “**dark side**” issues in intimate relationships such as abuse and violence between intimates. This chapter also discusses using communication to negotiate safer sex in an era where hooking up is not uncommon and sexually transmitted diseases are a danger.

Students are also increasingly career-focused. They want to know how what they are studying pertains to the world of work and how it will help them succeed in that world. This edition of *Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters* gives **prominence to connections between interpersonal communication concepts and skills and the workplace** in four ways. First, I include research about on-the-job communication within each chapter. Second, I call attention to particularly interesting connections between interpersonal communication and careers by highlighting them in “Communication in Everyday Life–Workplace” boxes. Third, at the end of each chapter, I include a workplace application. Finally, for instructors who want fuller coverage of on-the-job communication, I have prepared a chapter on organizational communication that can be bundled with this text as a part of our customization program; contact your sales representative for details.

Changes in the Eighth Edition

Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters has evolved in response to feedback from instructors and students as well as new research in communication and kindred disciplines.

I have made several significant content changes in this edition:

- This edition weaves cultural diversity more thoroughly into the book. Specifically, Chapter 2, which covers identity, discusses cultural influences on self-presentation. Chapter 3, which focuses on perception, highlights research showing that people from different cultures actually perceive visual phenomena differently—Westerners are more likely to be deceived by optical illusions than are people whose physical environments have fewer box shapes (for instance, rooms in homes). My discussion of conflict (Chapter 9) now includes information about cultural influences, on how people manage conflict and the extent to which they help one another maintain or save face in conflict situations.
- As noted earlier, this edition provides stronger and more integrated attention to social media. Every chapter includes a section that discusses connections between chapter themes and social media. In addition, every chapter includes one or more “Communication in Everyday Life” features that highlight social media.
- The text gives enhanced attention to ethics. In addition to coverage of ethical choices woven throughout the text, a Thinking Critically question focused specifically on ethics appears at the end of each chapter.
- Chapter 2, Communication and Personal Identity, includes a new section on how we express, or perform, our identities. In highlighting our human ability to choose how to perform our identities, this new material provides a useful complement to existing coverage of ways that others and culture shape identity.
- I’ve revised Chapter 12, Communication in Families, to be more relevant to contemporary students. I have added discussion of family

communication patterns that reflect the degrees of openness and hierarchy in different families, and I have included material on cultural influences on family interaction. I have added material on difficult conversations, such as telling parents of an unplanned pregnancy or the intention to drop out of school, or helping parents transition to retirement communities. This new material should help students think about and manage issues that face or will face them and their families.

- I have included findings from more than 125 new sources that reflect the latest research related to interpersonal communication. Attention to current research ensures that *Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters* remains grounded in strong scholarship while also being accessible to students.

Pedagogy for Personal Learning

In addition to this book’s distinct conceptual emphases, I’ve adopted a **conversational and personal tone** to encourage students to feel they are full participants in a dialogue. I use contractions, as people do in everyday conversations. Also, I include examples of everyday interactions so that abstract ideas are clarified in practical ways. In my writing, I share with students some of the communication challenges and encounters that have surfaced in my life. The conversational writing style aims to prompt students to think of their own examples and applications of material presented in the book. As students do this, they interact personally with the concepts, principles, and skills presented in this book.

My voice is not the only one that students will encounter in this book. All chapters are enhanced by a second personal learning feature— **student commentaries** that were written by students in interpersonal communication classes at my university and other colleges and universities around the nation. Their experiences, insights, and concerns broaden the conversation to include a wide range of perspectives. The student commentaries also encourage active learning through observation, comparison,

and analysis. As students read the commentaries, they observe others and compare and contrast others' experiences and perspectives with their own. If students wish to write their own commentaries for future editions of this book, I invite them to send those to me at Cengage.

In particular, this edition's pedagogy is built on a strengthened learning architecture, based on skill building, application, and critical thinking, reflected and integrated carefully in **MindTap**—a personalized teaching experience with assignments that guide students to analyze, apply, and improve thinking, allowing instructors to measure skills and outcomes with ease. At MindTap students are able to use dynamic technological resources, including interactive videos and simulations; find high-value gradable activities; and practice in an engaging, personalized online environment.

Each chapter now previews the chapter content for students with an easily reviewed set of **Learning Objectives** paired with a chapter outline. Each Learning Objective has been carefully matched with one or more activities that will demonstrate its mastery.

The **photo program** now includes more stills from popular media, with thought-provoking captions.

"Everyday Skills" now cover most Learning Objectives and emphasize that they are all about skill building. They may be answered in the book or online, in MindTap.

"Communication in Everyday Life" features—with the subcategories "Diversity," "Insight," "Social Media," and "Workplace"—highlight interesting research and examples of interpersonal communication in real life. These items encourage students to observe how principles and concepts actually work in concrete situations, to witness the application of theory and concepts to particular cases, and to compare their own experiences and values with those presented in the "Communication in Everyday Life" features. The features now include a new "Social Media" subcategory; I have renamed the "Career" subcategory "Workplace" to reflect the

fact that not all work need be considered a "career"; and I often conclude with a suggestion for applying the boxed material via reflection, action, or visiting an online site, to which students can provide written responses in MindTap.

An unparalleled collection of skill-building, application, and critical thinking activities appears at chapter's end and online in MindTap, beginning with the highly engaging "Continuing the Conversation" video situations. Chapter-end features have been revised and reorganized to provide a logical learning sequence for all activities, building up to progressively more challenging levels of practice and application. The levels move from the simplest review ("Chapter Summary" and "Key Concepts") to the most challenging application ("Thinking Critically").

High-value, gradable versions of all activities are incorporated in MindTap, and MindTap is cued in the text wherever appropriate, to remind students that they may take activities there interactively. End-of-chapter highlights:

"Continuing the Conversation," a short case study that continues the conversation of the chapter by allowing students to see how the theories and principles that they just read about show up in everyday life, appears first, as a warm-up activity. Video is available for students in MindTap.

"Assessing Yourself" self-assessment quizzes in most chapters allow students to apply chapter concepts at the most basic level: themselves.

"Everyday Skills" emphasize the next level of application: skill building with author support. "Everyday Skills" icons in the book's margins point students to these skill-building application exercises at the end of the chapter. In MindTap these exercises may be taken exactly where they are referenced in the text.

"Engaging with Ideas" reflections and **"Thinking Critically"** activities allow students to reflect and write in more depth—in MindTap—by considering questions about personal, on-the-job, and ethical applications.

Additional Resources for Instructors

Accompanying *Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters* is an Instructor Companion Website where you will find an Instructor's Resource Manual, Cengage Learning Testing Powered by Cognero, and PowerPoint presentations.

The extensive **Instructor's Resource Manual**, coauthored by Narissra Punyanunt-Carter of Texas Tech University and me, supplements the textbook. The manual discusses philosophical and pragmatic considerations involved in teaching the introductory course in interpersonal communication. It also includes suggestions for course emphases, sample syllabi, exercises, and films appropriate for each chapter, journal items, and panel ideas.

Cengage Learning Testing Powered by Cognero is a flexible, online system that allows you to

- Author, edit, and manage test bank content from multiple Cengage Learning solutions.
- multiple test versions in an instant.
- Deliver tests from your LMS, your classroom, or wherever you want.

The **Microsoft® PowerPoint® presentations** are predesigned for use with the book and fully customizable.

Acknowledgments

Although my name is the only one that appears as the author of this book, many people have contributed to it. I am especially indebted to my product manager at Cengage, Nicole Morinon. From the start, she was a full partner in this project. Her interest and insights greatly enhanced the content of this book, and her amazing sense of humor and fun made working on it a joy.

Also essential to this book were members of the publishing team who transformed my manuscript into the final book you are holding. Specifically, I thank Sue Gleason Wade, my awesome

senior content developer; Karolina Kiwak, associate content developer; Stacey Purviance, marketing director; Dan Saabye, content project manager; Jessica Badiner, senior media developer; Colin Solan, product assistant; Daniel Nighting, copyeditor; Linda May, art director; Ann Hoffman, IP analyst; and Sumathy Kumaran, project manager.

In addition to the editorial and production teams at Cengage, I am grateful to the survey respondents and reviewers who gave me valuable feedback that I used in preparing this edition: Erica Cooper, Roanoke College; Karen Daas, University of Texas at San Antonio; Tina Harris, University of Georgia; Stacy Kuntzman, University of North Carolina at Charlotte; Dianna Laurent, Southeastern Louisiana University; Matt Sanders, Utah State University; Kristi Schaller, University of Georgia; Neeley Silberman, Saint Mary's College; Brent Sleasman, Gannon University; Jason Stone, Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma City; and Judith Vogel, Des Moines Area Community College.

Finally, I am indebted to family and friends who enrich my life. At the top of that list is Robbie (Robert) Cox, my partner in love, life, adventure, and dreams for 40 years. He cheers with me when writing is going well and bolsters my confidence when it isn't. He provides a critical ear when I want a sounding board and privacy when I am immersed in a project. And he is an ongoing source of experience in interpersonal communication. Along with Robbie, I am fortunate to have the love and support of my sister Carolyn and my close friends, Todd, Sue, and LindaBecker. And, of course, always, I appreciate the love and patience of the four-footed members of my family: our dog, Cassidy, and our cats, Rigby and Rowdy. Unlike my two-footed friends, these three keep me company when I am writing at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning.



October 2014

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Julia Wood joined the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill when she was 24. During her 37 years on the faculty, she taught classes and conducted research on personal relationships and on gender, communication, and culture. She was named the Lineberger Distinguished Professor of Humanities and the Caroline H. and Thomas S. Royster Distinguished Professor of Graduate Education.

She has published 25 books and 100 articles and book chapters. In addition, she has presented more than 100 papers at professional conferences and campuses around the United States. She has

received 14 awards honoring her teaching and 16 awards recognizing her scholarship.

Professor Wood lives with her partner, Robert Cox, who is a Professor Emeritus of Communication Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Sharing their home are their dog, Cassidy, and two cats, Rigby and Rowdy.

Professor Wood continues to write and conduct research. In addition, she tutors ESL students in reading, volunteers at her local animal shelter, and enjoys travel and conversation with friends, family members, and former students.



© wavebreakmedia/Shutterstock.com

INTRODUCTION

READ... the complete chapter text in a rich interactive eBook!

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

When I was 20 years old, something happened that changed the rest of my life: I took my first interpersonal communication class. A new world of meaning opened up for me as I learned about the power of communication to enhance or harm our relationships. The more courses I took, the more fascinated I became, so I decided to make a career of studying and teaching interpersonal communication. I wrote *Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters* because I wanted to awaken you, as my first course awakened me, to the power of interpersonal communication to enrich us and the relationships in our lives.

In the opening pages of this book, I'll introduce you to the field of interpersonal communication, to myself, to the features of this book, and to some of the special concerns and issues that surround interpersonal communication in this era.

THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION

The field of communication has a long and distinguished intellectual history. It dates back to ancient Greece, where great philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato taught rhetoric, or public speaking, as a necessary skill for participation in civic life. In the 2,000 years since the communication field originated, it has expanded to encompass many kinds of interaction, including group discussion, family communication, health communication, oral traditions, organizational communication, and interpersonal communication.

Interpersonal communication is one of the most popular and vibrant areas in the discipline. Student demand for courses in interpersonal communication is consistently strong. Faculty respond by offering more classes, including advanced ones, that help students learn to interact effectively in their everyday interpersonal encounters.

Reflecting the intellectual maturity of the field, communication theory and research offer rich insight into the impact of interpersonal communication on individual identity and on personal, social, and professional relationships. Because interpersonal communication is central to our lives, it naturally intersects with other disciplines that are concerned with human behavior. Thus, research in communication contributes to and draws from work in such fields as psychology, business, sociology, anthropology, and counseling. The interdisciplinary mingling of ideas enriches the overall perspective on human interaction that you will find in *Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters*.

A PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

When I was an undergraduate, most of the books I read seemed distant and impersonal. I never had the feeling a real human being had written them, and authors never introduced themselves except by stating their titles. Certainly, that's no way to begin a book about interpersonal communication! I'd like to introduce myself personally to you and explain my reasons for writing this book.

As I've already mentioned, I became fascinated by interpersonal communication when I was an undergraduate student. Today, I'm more excited than ever about the study and practice of interpersonal communication. It has been exciting to watch and participate in the growth of research on interpersonal communication and to observe how strong scholarship has facilitated applications to people's everyday lives.

Although research and writing occupy a great deal of my time, I have other interests as well. For instance, I tutor English as a second language (ESL) citizens in English, and I invest in caring for animals that have been abused or abandoned. I also cherish my relationships with my partner, Robbie, and close friends and family. My interaction with these people continuously enlarges my appreciation of the vital role of interpersonal communication in our everyday lives.

In describing myself to you, I can also tell you that I am European American, southern, middle class, middle aged, and heterosexual and that I strive to live in ways that are consistent with my spiritual values. Each facet of my identity shapes how I communicate, just as your age, race, class, gender, spirituality, and sexual orientation shape your communication. For instance, I don't know what it is like to be a man, to be in a same-sex romantic relationship, or to live in poverty. However, that doesn't mean that I, or you, can't learn to understand and respect the experiences of people who differ—sometimes radically—from us.

All of us are limited by our own identities and the experiences and understandings they have—and have not—given us. Yet this doesn't mean we have to be completely uninformed about those who differ from us. In fact, the more we interact with a range of people, the more we discover important

Communication in Everyday Life DIVERSITY

A Kaleidoscopic Culture

The face of America is changing. We have always been a country of many races and ethnicities, and it's only going to become more so in years ahead. By 2043, the Census predicts that there will be no majority racial or ethnic group in the United States; by 2018, there will be no single racial or ethnic majority group of people under 18 years old (Cooper, 2013). Between 2005 and 2050, demographics in the United States are projected to change substantially (Yen, 2012).

	2005	2050
African American	13%	13%
Asian	5%	9%
Caucasian	67%	47%
Hispanic	14%	29%

The Census also predicts that there will be more older Americans in the years to come. Currently 1 in 7 Americans is 65 or older; by 2060, that should grow to 1 in 5 (Cooper, 2013).

To learn more about changing demographics in the United States, go to <http://www.census.gov>. Read information in the "People" category under "Estimates and Projections."

similarities as well as interesting differences. Learning about both is essential for ethical, effective participation in our pluralistic world.

Living and Learning in a Diverse World

In our era, it is essential to learn about and respect perspectives that differ from our own and from those of the communities in which we were raised. It's very likely that you will have friends and neighbors of different ethnic backgrounds from your own. It's even more likely—almost guaranteed—that you will work with people of diverse ages, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and spiritual commitments. You may date people of many races and religious backgrounds, and if you have children, it's very likely they will do the same. Personal effectiveness in our era requires skill in communicating well with a range of people.

Interacting with people who differ from us not only teaches us about them; it also prompts insights about ourselves. Westerners can see their competitive

attitude toward athletics in a new light if they consider the Japanese preference for tied or very close scores in sporting events so that neither side loses face. It is difficult to understand what whiteness is if you interact only with whites; it's hard to recognize the character of heterosexuality if you know only straight people. Thus, learning about people in other cultures and people who are outside of what the culture defines as mainstream inevitably teaches us about the mainstream as well.

The diversity of our society offers both opportunities and challenges. Exploring variations in gender, race, class, cultural heritage, sexual orientation, age, physical and mental ability, and spiritual belief can enhance our appreciation of the range of human behavior and the options open to us as people and as communicators. At the same time, diversity can complicate interaction because people may

Communication in Everyday Life

DIVERSITY

About Vocabulary in this Book

Because social diversity is woven into this book, it's important to think carefully about the language used to refer to social groups. Drawing on research, I present generalizations about various groups. Whenever possible, I cite research done by members of the groups we are discussing so we understand groups from the perspectives of insiders. But the generalizations are only that: generalizations. They are not universal truths that apply to all members of a group. There are always exceptions to generalizations. As you read, you may discover that you are a living exception to some of the generalizations about groups to which you belong. If so, you may want to reflect on the reasons you depart from group tendencies.

Generalizations should not be used to stereotype members of particular groups. For instance, in Chapter 4 you will read about gendered speech communities. You will learn how women and men typically—but not always, not in every case—differ in their communication styles. You will also learn about communication patterns in some traditional African American communities. The general patterns you read about don't describe every woman, man, or African American. Any of us may depart from the usual patterns of our groups, because of individual differences and because we belong to multiple groups.

The key point to keep in mind as you read is this: Generalizations are both important and limited. They are important because they inform us of broad patterns that can be useful starting points in our efforts to understand and interact with others. At the same time, generalizations are limited because they do not necessarily tell us about any single individual who belongs to a group. Thus, it's important to qualify generalizations. You'll notice that I use words such as *usually*, *typically*, and *in general*. These are to remind us that there are exceptions to generalizations, so we can never assume that a generalization applies to a specific person.



Dougal Waters/Digital Vision/Getty Images

communicate in dissimilar ways and misunderstand one another, as Yih-Tang Lin notes in her commentary.

When I first came here to school, I was amazed at how big the rooms in dormitories are, so I remarked on this. All of the Americans had a laugh at that and thought I was joking. In my country, individuals have very little space, and houses are tight together. The first time an American disagreed with me, I felt angry that he would make me lose face. We don't ever contradict another person directly. I have had many miscommunications in this country.



Students today recognize the importance of understanding a range of cultures. A survey of students who entered colleges and universities in the fall of 2009 showed that 49.4% believe that it is essential or very important to improve their understanding of other countries and cultures. That's an increase from the 42.7% who believed this in 2004 ("This Year's Freshmen," 2010).

Students are correct in thinking that contact with diversity enriches them. Recent studies show that students who encounter diversity score higher on critical thinking than students who do not, and white students show the most benefit (Berrett, 2012).

In this book, we will consider many ways in which diversity intersects with communication. For instance, we'll see how the same gestures mean very different things in different cultures, and we'll discover that women and men, in general, rely on both similar and distinct types of communication to create closeness. We'll also learn that race and ethnicity influence how people interact. And, as the Communication in Everyday Life: Social Media feature shows, we will learn how



age differences affect interpersonal communication. Weaving diversity into how we think about interpersonal communication enlarges understandings of communication and the range of people and perspectives it involves. Cherrie, a student in one of my courses, makes this point effectively in her commentary.

Communication in Everyday Life

SOCIAL MEDIA

What's Digitally Polite?

Is it polite to leave a voice message when someone doesn't answer the phone? How about sending an email to tell someone you left a voice mail—is that polite? Should you open emails with “hello” and close with “bye”? It turns out that whether you think those are polite courtesies or not may depend on your age.

Younger people are rewriting the rules of etiquette to fit an era saturated by social media. When you are sending dozens or even hundreds of messages a day, “hello” and “goodbye” become superfluous. So do emails or texts that say “thank you”—no need for those. If you call someone who doesn't answer their cell phone, they'll see that you called and should call or text you back to talk, so there's no need to leave a voice message (Bilton, 2013).

People who aren't digital natives, however, often operate by the rules that regulated communication as they were growing up. To them, it is polite to start messages with “hello” and end them with “goodbye”; in fact, it's impolite not to do so. And, to them, you should leave a message if the person you called doesn't answer—it's only polite to let her or him know why you called.

Communicating via social media, like communicating face to face, is most effective when we adapt our communication to the people with whom we are interacting. If you're calling a 60-year-old, it's probably fine to leave a voice message that you wouldn't leave when calling a 20-year-old.

This isn't the first time that new technologies have presented etiquette puzzles. When the telephone was invented in the 1870s, people weren't sure how to answer the phone. Many picked up the phone and said nothing, waiting for the caller to start the conversation. Alexander Graham Bell, who had invented the phone, proposed “Ahoy” as the proper greeting (Bilton, 2013).

I am Hispanic, and I am tired of classes and books that ignore my people. Last year, I took a course in family life, and all we talked about was Western, middle-class white families. Their ways are not my ways. A course on family should be about many kinds of families. I took a course in great literature, and there was only one author who was not Western and only three who were women. It's not true that only white men write great literature.



Cherrie

Cherrie and others who were not born and raised in the United States also have much to teach students who are native citizens of the United States, as Carl's commentary reveals.

At first, I was really put off by the two students in our class who were from China. Like when we talked about conflict and they just didn't get it—I mean, that's the way it seemed to me when they said they tried to avoid it. But the more I listened to them, the more I saw that they were really saying there are ways for people to work around differences without having to attack each other or make the other person look bad. It's really different than how I was brought up—you know, stand your ground, muster your arguments, win! I'm still not sure I really get their perspective, but it does make me think about whether I always need to be so fast to try to beat the next guy.



Carl

Like many of us, Carl's first inclination is to view ways other than his own as inferior. But Carl moved beyond that starting point. He worked to consider his Chinese classmates' perspectives on conflict on their terms, in the context of their culture. In turn, they enlarged Carl's perspective on ways to deal with conflict. Like Carl, most of us will not always find it easy to appreciate or respect ways that are different from our own. Yet the struggle is worthwhile because it can enrich us personally and enable us to participate more effectively in a world characterized by many perspectives on life and communication.

INTRODUCTION TO FEATURES OF THIS BOOK

Woven into this book are four features that I think will make it more interesting to you and more helpful as a resource for understanding and improving your own interpersonal communication.

First, I've written this book in a **conversational tone** so that you can connect with the ideas in the pages that follow. Like you, I am interested in interpersonal communication, and I am continually trying to figure out how to be more effective in my everyday encounters with others. In this book, I share some of my experiences and some of the perspectives and skills that enhance my interactions.

Second, in each chapter I feature **comments from students** such as Cherrie, Carl, and Yih-Tang Lin. Because students teach me so much, I've included many of their comments in the chapters that follow. These are taken from journals they've kept in interpersonal communication classes taught by me and by instructors at other schools. In reading their commentaries, you'll discover that some of these students seem much like you and that others seem quite different. It's likely that you'll agree with some of the students' comments, disagree with others, and want to think still further about others. However you respond to their ideas, I suspect that, like me, you will find them interesting, insightful, and often challenging.

Third, each chapter includes several "Communication in Everyday Life" features that extend chapter coverage by **spotlighting interesting research and news items** about interpersonal communication. When this information is particularly relevant to cultural diversity, social media, or the workplace, I call that to your attention with special titles for each of those themes.

Fourth, this book emphasizes **personal learning**. Most of us, especially students, are familiar with impersonal learning, which occurs when someone else tells or shows us something. In other words, we receive knowledge passively.

Personal learning, in contrast, occurs when we interact with subject matter. Rather than just receiving information, we do something active—we reflect, observe, assess ourselves, discuss, debate, engage in action, or reflect on and write about ideas; we experiment with principles and skills; we contrast, compare, and analyze. All of these activities involve us in generating and testing knowledge rather than just receiving it. The personal learning approach assumes that effective learning involves some kind of experience and some dialogue with the self (reflection, application) or others.

Several specific end-of-chapter and online features in this book foster personal learning. First is a feature titled "Continuing the Conversation." These are short case studies that allow you to see, on the web, how concepts, theories, and principles discussed in the chapter show up in real-life interactions. Second, in most chapters you will find an "Assessing Yourself" quiz whose answers will be revealed if you take it online. Third, you'll find several "Everyday Skills" that give you an opportunity to extend and apply material discussed in the text to your own life by doing something or engaging in dialogue with yourself or others. Some of the "Everyday Skills" show you how to develop a particular communication skill; others ask you to reflect on ideas we've discussed to observe communication principles and patterns in your everyday encounters. Fourth, there are "Engaging with Ideas" features that ask you to reflect on one question that requires personal learning, as well as two other questions that focus on the workplace and ethics. Finally, there are "Thinking Critically" questions for you to reflect on and write about in more depth.

I hope this book will enhance your appreciation of the power of interpersonal communication in our relationships. I also hope it will motivate you to apply the principles and skills presented here in your everyday life.

Julia T Wood

chapter
ONE

© bikeriderlondon/Shutterstock.com

A FIRST LOOK AT INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION