

INTERPERSONAL MESSAGES

FOURTH EDITION

JOSEPH A. DEVITO



Interpersonal Messages

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FOURTH EDITION

Joseph A. DeVito

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Welcome to *Interpersonal Messages*

It's a great pleasure to present this fourth edition of *Interpersonal Messages*. Although significantly revised, the book continues to emphasize its original two inter-related purposes: (1) to present you with an overview of interpersonal communication—what it is and what we know about it—and (2) to provide you with numerous choices for improving your interpersonal communication and relationship skills. These two purposes influence everything included in the text—the topics discussed, the way each topic is presented, the specific skills highlighted, and the pedagogy incorporated.

What's New in the Fourth Edition

REVEL™

Educational technology designed for the way today's students read, think, and learn

The most noticeable change in this new edition is our incorporation of REVEL, a new educational technology designed for the way today's students read, think, and learn. When students are engaged deeply, they learn more effectively and perform better in their courses. This simple fact inspired the creation of REVEL: an immersive learning experience designed for the way today's students read, think, and learn. Built in collaboration with educators and students nationwide, REVEL is the newest, fully digital way to deliver respected Pearson content.

REVEL enlivens course content with media interactives and assessments—integrated directly within the authors' narrative—that provide opportunities for students to read about and practice course material in tandem. This immersive educational technology boosts student engagement, which leads to better understanding of concepts and improved performance throughout the course.

Learn more about REVEL

<http://www.pearsonhighered.com/REVEL/>

Rather than simply offering opportunities to read about and study interpersonal communication, REVEL facilitates deep, engaging interactions with the concepts that matter most. For example, when learning about politeness, students are presented with a self-assessment that scores their typical communication behaviors, allowing them to examine their own level of politeness and consider how they could improve on it. By providing opportunities to read about and practice communication in tandem, REVEL engages students directly and immediately, which leads to a better understanding of course material. A wealth of student and instructor resources and interactive materials can be found within REVEL, such as:

- **Test Yourself Self-Assessments** Interactive self-assessments allow students to analyze their own communication styles, enabling them to learn and grow over the duration of the course. A variety of self-assessment styles are offered, including fill-in-the-blank, True or False, and numerical ratings.
- **Dialogue Examples** Inline audio examples of effective and ineffective communication approaches are enhanced with audio demonstrations, adding dimension and reinforcing learning in a way that a printed text cannot. Dialogue examples range from effective communication between two people to individual communication strategies.
- **Videos and Video Quizzes** Video examples of interpersonal role-plays and expert advice throughout the narrative boost mastery, and many videos are bundled with correlating self-checks, enabling students to test their knowledge.
- **Interactive Figures** Interactive figures (such as the Johari Window and a Five-Stage Model of Conversation) give students a hands-on experience, increasing their ability to grasp difficult concepts. By allowing students to examine specific parts of a model and offering accompanying real-life examples, broad and theoretical concepts suddenly become easier to understand.
- **Interactive Cultural Maps** Interactive maps throughout the book illustrate how the major cultural differences first discussed in Chapter 2 (such as ambiguity tolerance, masculine and feminine orientation, and power

distance) differ around the world. In REVEL, readers are given the opportunity to manipulate and interact with the maps.

- **Integrated Writing Opportunities** To help students connect chapter content with their own personal and social lives, each chapter offers two varieties of writing prompts: (1) the journal prompt, eliciting a free-form, topic-specific response addressing topics at the module level, and (2) the shared writing prompt, eliciting a focused, brief response addressing topics at the chapter level that students can share with each other.

To access your own REVEL account and get more information about the tools and resources in REVEL, go to www.pearsonhighered.com/REVEL.

Text Features

In addition to the interactive enhancements of REVEL, this new edition fully integrates the latest research as well as updated examples, photos, and cartoons to keep the text current and pedagogically effective. Throughout the book, you find new instances of the following features.

- **Learning Objectives** Learning objectives appear at the beginning of each chapter, in the text proper (with each major heading), and in the summary at the end of the chapter. These objectives highlight the major concepts and skills of the chapter. They do not include all the objectives a particular course may specify or that you'll gain from a given chapter. The learning objectives system used here—and there are a variety of these—identifies three major levels of thinking, each of which is included throughout the text (Bloom, 1956; Teacher & Educational Development, 2005; Eggen & Kauchak, 2013):
 - **Knowledge** (recalling, remembering, and comprehending), introduced by such specific verbs as *define*, *paraphrase*, *describe*, and *differentiate*.
 - **Application** (applying a concept to a new situation), introduced by such specific verbs as *diagram*, *illustrate*, *use*, and *give examples*.
 - **Problem solving** (analyzing/breaking a concept into its parts, synthesizing/combining elements into a new whole, and evaluating/making value or appropriateness judgments), introduced by such specific verbs as *assess*, *construct*, *organize*, and *evaluate*.
- **Skill Development Exercises** now appear at the end of each chapter. New topics include exercises on using impression management strategies, responding to empathy, estimating height, using nonverbal messages, making small talk, making introductions, apologizing, giving and receiving compliments, giving and receiving advice. In REVEL, many of these exercises are interactive.

- **In a Nutshell** summary tables and bulleted lists throughout the text summarize major sections, making it easier for students to review section content and fix it more firmly in memory.
- **Viewpoints Photos and Captions** ask you to consider a variety of communication issues, many of which are research based and/or focus on the themes of social media, the workplace, and culture.
- Through **Interpersonal Choice Points** and **Ethical Choice Points**, readers are encouraged to identify, consider, and evaluate their interpersonal communication choices in different contexts. In this edition, the choice points are more closely aligned with the chapter learning objectives. In REVEL, the Choice Points are available as interactive writing opportunities.
- New and revised **figures** and **models** help illustrate such concepts as self-concept, self-esteem, perception, impression management, the power of nonverbal communication, and conflict management. In REVEL, many of the figures and models are interactive.

Chapter Updates

Here, briefly are some of the chapter-by-chapter changes. In addition to these changes, all chapters have been revised for greater clarity and less redundancy.

- Chapter 1, Foundations of Interpersonal Communication, includes new research about the benefits of studying interpersonal communication as it relates to professional success, expanded coverage on the importance of interpersonal communication in both online and offline environments, and more information on making reasoned choices and being an effective code-switcher.
- Chapter 2, Culture and Interpersonal Communication, features a new visual of the various factors that account for the importance of culture in interpersonal communication, as well as a new explanation that clarifies the difference between ethnic identity and race. The table on communication between those with and without general disabilities has been shortened to a bulleted list.
- Chapter 3, Perception of Self and Others, contains two new figures that illustrate the sources of self-concept and impression management goals and a Cultural Map on ambiguity tolerance. The chapter also includes new coverage on comparison with others and reflections of self-esteem on social media sites, as well as new material on attacking self-destructive beliefs.
- Chapter 4, Listening in Interpersonal Communication, includes a new Cultural Map on politeness, a reorgan-

ized and streamlined section titled Four Listening Styles, and a new Skill Development Exercise on empathic listening. The table on communication between those with and without hearing impairments has been shortened to a bulleted list.

- Chapter 5, Verbal Messages, contains two new figures that illustrate disconfirmation with “-isms” (for example racism, ageism, or sexism) and a new Cultural Map on high- and low-context cultures.
- Chapter 6, Nonverbal Messages, features a new table that shows five types of body movements and a thoroughly revised section on time, divided into psychological, interpersonal, and cultural. Also included is an integrated self test on psychological time and a Cultural Map that shows long-term versus short-term orientation across the world. The chapter ends with a new Skill Development Exercise on height and the messages it sends to others. The table on communication between those with and without visual impairment has been shortened to a bulleted list.
- Chapter 7, Emotional Messages, includes a new Cultural Map on indulgent and restraint orientation and updated research in the section on emotional responding on computer recognition of emotions.
- Chapter 8, Conversation Messages, includes a new subsection on the Principle of Cooperation (previously in Chapter 2) and new coverage about the Rule of Reciprocity. This chapter also includes a new Cultural Map on the topic of apologies as well as new Skill Development Exercises on opening and closing conversations, making apologies, and giving or receiving compliments.
- Chapter 9, Interpersonal Relationships, contains new coverage on social penetration theory with an accompanying figure and a new Cultural Map on relationship length.
- Chapter 10, Interpersonal Relationship Types and Theories, includes a new section on friends with benefits, a Cultural Map on masculine and feminine orientation, as well as new research about online dating and friendships.
- Chapter 11, Interpersonal Conflict Management, introduces new coverage on social allergens and includes a new Cultural Map on success. The Stages of Conflict Management section is thoroughly revised to center the discussion around the theme of choices.

Major Themes

Interpersonal Messages highlights several interwoven themes in the study of interpersonal communication and—taken together—they define the uniqueness of this text: social

media, the workplace, culture, choice, politeness, ethics, skills, and interactive approach.

Social Media

Interpersonal communication, as viewed here, incorporates the varied social media that are now an essential part of our communication lives. And so, to take just one example, the definition of listening—long defined as the reception of auditory signals—is redefined to include the reading of social media messages. The reasoning is simply that if posting on Facebook and Google+ is an example of interpersonal communication (which it surely is) then the reading of these messages must also be part of interpersonal communication and seems to fit most logically with listening.

Online-Only Relationships

10.5 Define *online-only relationships* and explain how to communicate more effectively in these relationships.

In addition to friendships, romantic, family, and workplace relationships—which will probably involve both face-to-face and online interactions—there is another group of what might be called “online-only” relationships. These are the relationships that exist between a tweeter and a follower, a blogger and a reader, a friend or contact on

Workplace

This fourth edition places additional emphasis on workplace communication and relationships with frequent examples, illustrations, and photo ViewPoints and in a variety of more clearly workplace related topics such as values in the workplace as seen by long and short term oriented executives, emotions at work, romantic relationships in the workplace, and workplace conflict.

Table 2.3 Values of the Workplace

This table presents the six values ranked highest by Asian and American executives (beginning with the highest-ranked value) (Hofstede et al., 2010). Notice that “hard work” makes both lists but in very different positions.

Values Selected by Asian (Long-Term Orientation) Executives	Values Selected by American (Short-Term Orientation) Executives
Hard work	Freedom of expression
Respect for learning	Personal freedom
Honesty	Self-reliance
Openness to new ideas	Individual rights
Accountability	Hard work
Self-discipline	Personal achievement

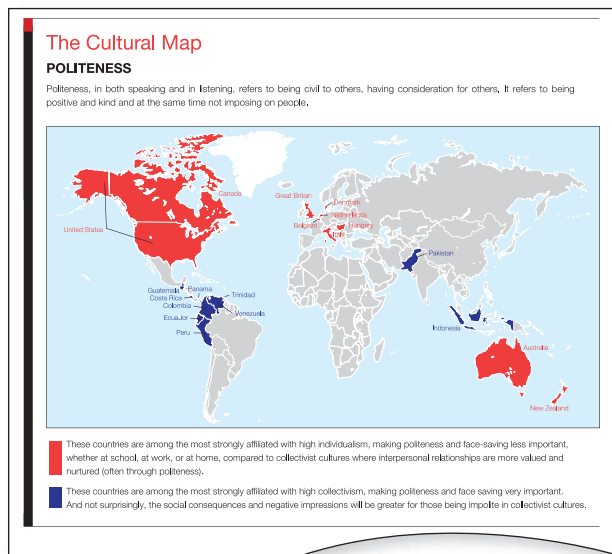
Culture

In the first edition of *Interpersonal Messages*, the crucial role that culture plays in our interpersonal interactions was a recurring theme; in this fourth edition we continue this emphasis.

- Chapter 1 introduces the concept of culture as an essential ingredient in all interpersonal interactions and an integral part of interpersonal competence.

- Chapter 2 is devoted entirely to culture and explains the foundational role that culture plays in all interpersonal communication interactions. This chapter covers the relationship of culture to interpersonal communication, discusses some major cultural differences, and offers a series of important guidelines for improving intercultural communication.
- Chapter 3 explores the influence of culture on self-concept and cultural sensitivity as a means to increasing your accuracy in interpersonal perception.
- Chapter 4 examines listening differences among cultures and between men and women.
- Chapter 5 looks at culture and gender differences in directness; racism, heterosexism, ageism, and sexism.
- Chapter 6 considers the influence of culture on gesture, facial expression, colors, touch, silence, and time.
- Chapter 7 looks at the role of culture in emotional conversation.
- Chapter 8 examines cultural differences in self-disclosure.
- Chapters 9 and 10 explore cultural differences in interpersonal relationships (friendship, love, and family).
- Chapter 11 includes gender and cultural influences on interpersonal conflict.

This fourth edition incorporates a new feature, the **Cultural Map**, to further emphasize the importance and ubiquity of cultural influences. This feature is introduced in Chapter 2, Culture and Interpersonal Communication, and appears in all subsequent chapters covering such issues as ambiguity tolerance, indulgence and restraint, and long-term and short-term orientation.



Choice

Throughout your interpersonal interactions, you'll be confronted with choice points, those moments in which you'll need to decide between saying one thing or another, between sending an e-mail or calling on the phone, between being supportive or critical, and so on. Because of the central importance of choice, **Journal: Interpersonal Choice Points** (brief scenarios) invite you to identify and evaluate your choices for communicating. In REVEL, the Choice Points are presented in every module as journal prompt writing opportunities.

JOURNAL INTERPERSONAL CHOICE POINT

Choices and Interpersonal Communication

Throughout this book, you'll find items labeled *Interpersonal Choice Points*. These items are designed to encourage you to apply the material discussed in the text to specific interpersonal situations by first analyzing your available choices, then evaluating them, and then making a communication decision. To get started: What interpersonal communication choices have you made today?

Politeness

Interpersonal communication scholars, along with business professionals throughout the world, are coming to realize the importance of politeness in our everyday communication encounters. They are finding that politeness is more than simply being a nice person; it also can help you to be a more effective communicator. The role that politeness plays in interpersonal interactions and the skills for polite interpersonal communication are covered throughout the text. Here are some of the more important discussions:

- The relevance of politeness to interpersonal competence (Chapter 1)
- The politeness principle in the discussion of culture (Chapter 2)
- Politeness strategies in impression management (Chapter 3)
- Polite and impolite listening, along with suggestions for giving politeness cues while listening (Chapter 4)
- Politeness and directness, gender differences, and online politeness in verbal messages (Chapter 5)
- Politeness as expressed nonverbally in, for example, eye contact and touching (Chapter 6)
- Politeness in emotional expression (Chapter 7)

- The principles of conversational politeness (Chapter 8)
- Relationship politeness and how it varies with the stages of a relationship (Chapter 9)
- Politeness at work (Chapter 10)
- Face-attacking and face-enhancing strategies: politeness in conflict (Chapter 11)

Test Yourself
HOW POLITE ARE YOU?

Try estimating your own level of politeness. For each of the statements below, indicate how closely it describes your typical communication behavior. Avoid giving responses that you feel might be considered "socially acceptable"; instead, give responses that accurately represent your typical communication behavior. Use a ten-point scale with 10 being "very accurate description of my typical conversation" and 1 being "very inaccurate description of my typical conversation."

_____ 1. I tend not to ask others to do something or to otherwise impose on others.	_____ 4. I seldom praise myself but often praise others.
_____ 2. I tend to put others first, before myself.	_____ 5. I maximize the expression of agreement and minimize disagreement.
_____ 3. I maximize the expression of approval of others and minimize any disapproval.	_____ 6. I maximize my sympathy for another and minimize any feelings of antipathy.

All six statements would characterize politeness, so high numbers, say 8–10, would indicate politeness whereas low numbers, say 1–3, would indicate impoliteness. As you read this material, personalize it with examples from your own interpersonal interactions, and try to identify specific examples and situations in which increased politeness might have been more effective.

Ethics

Because the messages you use have effects on others, they also have an ethical dimension. As such, ethics receives focused attention throughout the text. Chapter 1 introduces

ethics as a basic concept in all forms of interpersonal communication. In all subsequent chapters, *Ethical Messages* boxes highlight a variety of ethical issues in interpersonal communication and ask you to apply ethical principles to various scenarios. Considered here are such ethical issues as cultural practices, lying, and ways to engage in interpersonal conflict ethically. These boxes will serve as frequent reminders that ethical considerations are an integral part of all the interpersonal communication choices/decisions you make.

Skills

Improving interpersonal communication skills is integral to all the text discussions and so **Skill Building Exercises** appear at the ends of each chapter. Completing these exercises will help you apply the material in the chapter to specific situations and thereby increase and perfect your own interpersonal skills. These exercises are practice experiences aimed at increasing your ability to formulate more effective messages. Skills are also highlighted in the glossaries and summaries at the ends of the chapters.

Ethical Messages

THE ETHICS OF IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

Impression management strategies may also be used unethically and for less-than-noble purposes. As you read these several examples, ask yourself at what point impression management strategies become unethical:

- You use affinity-seeking strategies to get others to like you so that they'd be more likely to do things for you.
- You present yourself as credible (as being competent, moral, and charismatic) when in fact you're really not.
- You use self-handicapping strategies to get others to see your behavior from a positive perspective.
- You use self-deprecating strategies to get someone to do something for you.
- You use self-monitoring strategies to present a more polished image than one that might come out without this self-monitoring.
- You use influence strategies to deceive and for self-gain.
- You use image-confirming strategies to exaggerate your positive and minimize your negative qualities.

ETHICAL CHOICE POINT

You're ready to join one (perhaps several) of the online dating services. You need to write your profile and are wondering if everyone (or nearly everyone) exaggerates, shouldn't you also? Specifically, you're considering saying that you earn a very good salary (actually, it's not so great, but you're hoping for a promotion), are twenty pounds lighter (actually, you intend to lose weight), and own a condo (actually, that's a goal once you get the promotion and save a down payment). If you don't exaggerate, you reason, you'll disadvantage yourself and not meet the people you want to meet. Also, you figure that people expect you to exaggerate and assume that you're probably a lot less ideal than your profile would indicate. Would this be ethical?

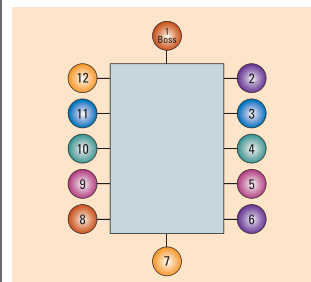
Skill Building Exercises

6.1 Choosing the Right Seat

Nonverbal choices (such as the seat you select or the clothes you wear) have an impact on communication and on your image as a communicator.

The graphic here represents a meeting table with 12 chairs, one of which is already occupied by the boss. Below are listed five messages you might want to communicate. For each of these messages, indicate (a) where you would sit to communicate the desired message, (b) the messages that your choice of seat would make it easier for you to communicate, and (c) any other possible messages that your choice of seat would likely communicate.

1. You want to ingratiate yourself with your boss _____
2. You aren't prepared and want to be ignored _____
3. You want to challenge your boss on a certain policy that will come up for a vote _____
4. You want to help your boss on a certain policy that will come up for a vote _____
5. You want to be accepted as a new (but important) member of the company _____



Pearson Mediashare

The screenshot displays the Pearson MediaShare interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'My Courses', and a user profile for 'Amy Wetzel, Instructor'. Below this, a 'MY COURSES' section lists three courses: 'Interpersonal Communication' (08/05/2015 - 12/03/2015), 'Introduction To Communication' (08/05/2015 - 12/03/2015), and 'Public Speaking' (08/07/2015 - 12/31/2015). A 'Public Speaking' course is expanded to show a table of assignments.

Due Date	Assignment Title	Collaboration	Grading	
09/10/2015	Persuasive Speech	CLASS COMMENTS	10 COMPLETED 0 DUE 10 GRADED	Edit Copy
09/05/2015	Informative Speech	CLASS COMMENTS	10 COMPLETED 0 DUE 10 GRADED	Edit Copy
08/30/2015	Introductory Speech	CLASS COMMENTS	10 COMPLETED 0 DUE 10 GRADED	Edit Copy
08/15/2015	Learning to use MediaShare	CLASS COMMENTS	10 COMPLETED 0 DUE 10 GRADED	Edit Copy
08/02/2015	Welcome to Public Speaking	CLASS COMMENTS	10 COMPLETED 0 DUE 10 GRADED	Edit Copy

Pearson's comprehensive media upload tool allows students to post video, images, audio, or documents for instructor and peer viewing, time-stamped commenting, and assessment. MediaShare is an easy, mobile way for students and professors to interact and engage with speeches, presentation aids, group projects, and other files. MediaShare gives professors the tools to provide contextual feedback to demonstrate how students can improve their skills.

Structured like a social networking site, MediaShare helps promote a sense of community among students. In face-to-face and online course settings, MediaShare saves instructors valuable time and enriches the student learning experience by providing contextual feedback.

- Use MediaShare to assign or view speeches, outlines, presentation aids, video-based assignments, role plays, group projects, and more in a variety of formats including video, Word, PowerPoint, and Excel.
- Assess students using customizable, Pearson-provided rubrics or create your own around classroom goals, learning outcomes, or department initiatives.
- Set up assignments for students with options for full-class viewing and commenting, private comments between you and the student, peer groups for reviewing, or as collaborative group assignments.

- Record video directly from a tablet, phone, or other webcam (including a batch upload option for instructors) and tag submissions to a specific student or assignment.
- Set up Learning Objectives tied to specific assignments, rubrics, or quiz questions to track student progress.
- Embed video from YouTube to incorporate current events into the classroom experience.
- Set up quiz questions on video assignments to ensure that students master concepts and interact and engage with the media.
- Sync slides to media submissions for more robust presentation options.
- Import grades into most learning management systems.
- Ensure a secure learning environment for instructors and students through robust privacy settings.
- Upload videos, comment on submissions, and grade directly from our new MediaShare app, available free from the iTunes store and GooglePlay; search for Pearson MediaShare.

Pearson MediaShare is available as a standalone product, as part of MyCommunicationLab, or in a package with REVEL.

Instructor and Student Resources

Key instructor resources include an Instructor's Manual (ISBN 0-13-420433-6), TestBank, (ISBN 0-13-420438-7), and PowerPoint Presentation Package (ISBN 0-13-420435-2). These supplements are available at www.pearsonhighered.com/irc (instructor login required). MyTest online test-generating software (ISBN 0-13-420434-4) is available at www.pearsonmytest.com (instructor login required). For a complete list of the instructor and student resources available with the text, please visit the Pearson Communication catalog, at www.pearsonhighered.com/communication.

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Chapter 1

Foundations of Interpersonal Communication



Interpersonal communication involves speakers and listeners speaking and listening.

CHAPTER OUTLINE



Learning Objectives

Why Study Interpersonal Communication

1.1 Explain the personal and professional benefits of the study of interpersonal communication.

The Nature of Interpersonal Communication

1.2 Define *interpersonal communication*.

The Elements of Interpersonal Communication

1.3 Diagram a model of communication containing *source–receiver, messages, channel, noise, and context*, and define each of these elements.

Principles of Interpersonal Communication

1.4 Explain the principles of interpersonal communication and give examples of each.

Interpersonal Competence

1.5 Define *communication competence* and explain the essential interpersonal communication competencies.

Why Study Interpersonal Communication

1.1 Explain the personal and professional benefits of the study of interpersonal communication

Fair questions to ask at the beginning of this text and this course are “What will I get out of studying interpersonal communication?” and “Why should I study interpersonal communication?” As with any worthwhile study, we can identify two major benefits: personal and professional.

Personal Success

Your personal success and happiness depend largely on your effectiveness as an interpersonal communicator. Your close friendships, romantic relationships, and family relationships are made, maintained, and sometimes destroyed largely through your interpersonal interactions. For example, in a survey of 1,001 people over 18 years of age, 53 percent felt that a lack of effective communication was the major cause of marriage failure, significantly greater than money (38 percent) and in-law interference (14 percent) (Roper Starch, 1999).

Likewise, your personal success in interacting with neighbors, work colleagues, acquaintances, and people you meet every day depends on your ability to engage in satisfying conversation—conversation that’s comfortable and enjoyable.

Professional Success

The ability to communicate interpersonally is widely recognized as crucial to professional success (Morreale & Pearson, 2008). From the initial interview at a college job fair to interning to participating in and then leading meetings, your skill at interpersonal communication will largely determine your success.

One study, for example, found that among the 23 attributes ranked as “very important” in hiring decisions, “communication and interpersonal skills” was at the top of the list, noted by 89 percent of recruiters. This was a far higher percentage of recruiters than noted “content of the core curriculum” (34 percent) or “overall value for the money invested in the recruiting effort” (33 percent) (Alsop, 2004). Interpersonal skills play an important role in preventing workplace violence (Parker, 2004) and in reducing medical mishaps and improving doctor–patient communication (Epstein & Hundert, 2002; Smith, 2004; Sutcliffe, Lewton, & Rosenthal, 2004). In a survey of employers who were asked what colleges should place more emphasis on, 89 percent identified “the ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing,” the highest of all skills listed (Hart Research Associates, 2010). And in that same survey, the largest number of employers (84 percent), when asked what would prepare college students for success, identified “communication skills.” In still another survey of women and leadership, the ability to communicate and to build relationships—the essentials of interpersonal communication—were noted among the competencies exemplified by top leaders (Harvard Business Review, 2013). The importance of interpersonal communication skills extends over the entire spectrum of professions.

As a preface to an area of study that will be enlightening, exciting, and extremely practical, examine your assumptions about interpersonal communication by taking the accompanying self-test.

JOURNAL INTERPERSONAL CHOICE POINT

Choices and Interpersonal Communication

Throughout this book, you’ll find items labeled *Interpersonal Choice Points*.

These items are designed to encourage you to apply the material discussed in the text to specific interpersonal situations by first analyzing your available choices, then evaluating them, and then making a communication decision. *To get started: What interpersonal communication choices have you made today?*



VIEWPOINTS: To Communicate

Women often report that an essential quality—perhaps the most important quality—in a partner is the ability to communicate. *How important, compared to all the other factors you might take into consideration in choosing a partner, is the ability to communicate? What specific interpersonal communication skills would you consider “extremely important” in a life partner?*

Test Yourself

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ABOUT INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION?

Respond to each of the following statements with **T** (for true) if you believe the statement is usually true or **F** (for false) if you believe the statement is usually false.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>_____ 1. Good communicators are born, not made.</p> <p>_____ 2. The more you communicate, the better at communicating you will be.</p> <p>_____ 3. In your interpersonal communications, it is good to be as open, empathic, and supportive as you can be.</p> | <p>_____ 4. In intercultural communication, it's best to ignore differences and communicate just as you would with members of your own culture.</p> <p>_____ 5. When there is conflict, your relationship is in trouble.</p> |
|---|--|

As you probably figured out, all five statements are generally false. As you read this text, you'll discover not only why these beliefs are false but also the trouble you can get into when you assume they're true. For now and in brief, here are some of the reasons why each statement is (generally) false: (1) Effective communication is learned; all of us can improve our abilities and become more effective communicators. (2) It isn't the amount of communication that matters, it's the quality. If you practice bad habits, you're more likely to grow less effective than more effective. (3) Because each interpersonal situation is unique, the type of communication appropriate in one situation may not be appropriate in another. (4) Ignoring differences will often create problems; people from different cultures may, for example, follow different rules for what is and what is not appropriate in interpersonal communication. (5) All meaningful relationships experience conflict; the trick is to manage it effectively.

This is a good place to start practicing the critical thinking skill of questioning commonly held assumptions—about communication and about yourself as a communicator. Do you hold beliefs that may limit your thinking about communication? For example, do you believe that certain kinds of communication are beyond your capabilities? Do you impose limits on how you see yourself as a communicator?

The Nature of Interpersonal Communication

1.2 Define *interpersonal communication*.

Although this entire book is in a sense a definition of interpersonal communication, a working definition is useful at the start. **Interpersonal communication** is the verbal and nonverbal interaction between two interdependent people (sometimes more). This relatively simple definition implies a variety of characteristics.

Interpersonal Communication Involves Interdependent Individuals

Interpersonal communication is the communication that takes place between people who are in some way “connected.” Interpersonal communication would thus include what takes place between a son and his father, an employer and an employee, two sisters, a teacher and a student, two lovers, two friends, and so on. Although largely dyadic in nature, interpersonal communication is often extended to include small intimate groups such as the family. Even within a family, however, the communication that takes place is often dyadic—mother to child, sister to sister, and so on.

Not only are the individuals simply “connected,” they are also *interdependent*: What one person does has an effect on the other person. The actions of one person have consequences for the other person. In a family, for example, a child’s trouble with the police will affect the parents, other siblings, extended family members, and perhaps friends and neighbors.

Interpersonal Communication Is Inherently Relational

Because of this interdependency, interpersonal communication is inevitably and essentially relational in nature. Interpersonal communication takes place in a relationship, it affects the relationship, it defines the relationship. The way you communicate is determined in great part by the kind of relationship that exists between you and the other person. You interact differently with your interpersonal communication instructor and your best friend; you interact with a sibling in ways very different from the ways you interact with a neighbor, a work colleague, or a casual acquaintance.

But notice also that the way you communicate will influence the kind of relationship you have. If you interact in friendly ways, you’re likely to develop a friendship. If you regularly exchange hateful and hurtful messages, you’re likely to develop an antagonistic relationship. If you each regularly express respect and support for each other, a respectful and supportive relationship is likely to develop. This is surely one of the most obvious observations you can make about interpersonal communication. And yet so many seem not to appreciate this very clear relationship between what you say and the relationship that develops (or deteriorates).

At the same time that interpersonal communication is relational, it also says something about you. Regardless of what you say, you are making reference, in some way, to yourself—to who you are and to what you’re thinking and feeling, to what you value. Even your “likes” on Facebook, research shows, can reveal, for example, your sexual orientation, age, intelligence, and drug use; and photos—depending on the smile—can communicate your level of personal well-being (Entis, 2013).

Interpersonal Communication Exists on a Continuum

Interpersonal communication exists along a continuum (see Figure 1.1), ranging from relatively impersonal at one end to highly personal at the other (Miller, 1978, 1990). At the impersonal end of the continuum, you have simple conversation



Figure 1.1 An Interpersonal Continuum

Here is one possible interpersonal continuum. Other people would position the relationships differently. You may want to try constructing an interpersonal continuum of your own face-to-face and online relationships.

between people who, we'd say, really don't know each other—the server and the customer, for example. At the highly personal end is the communication that takes place between people who are intimately interconnected—a father and son, two longtime lovers, or best friends, for example. A few characteristics distinguish the impersonal from the personal forms of communication and are presented in Table 1.1 (Miller, 1978).

Interpersonal Communication Involves Verbal and Nonverbal Messages

The interpersonal interaction involves the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages. The words you use as well as your facial expressions—your eye contact and your body posture, for example—send messages. Likewise, you receive messages through your sense of hearing as well as through your other senses, especially vision and touch. Even silence sends messages. These messages, as you'll see throughout this course, will vary greatly depending on the other factors involved in the interaction. You don't talk to a best friend in the same way you talk to your college professor or your parents.

One of the great myths about communication is that nonverbal communication accounts for more than 90 percent of the meaning of any message. Actually, it depends. In some situations, the nonverbal signals will carry more of your meaning than the words you use. In other situations, the verbal signals will communicate more information. Most often, of course, they work together, and, rather than focusing on which channel communicates the greater percentage of meaning, it's more important to focus on the ways in which verbal and nonverbal messages occur together.

Interpersonal Communication Exists in Varied Forms

Interpersonal communication often takes place face-to-face, as when we talk with other students before class, interact with family or friends over dinner, or trade secrets with intimates. But interpersonal communication also takes place over some kind of computer network, through texting, e-mailing, posting to Facebook, phoning, pinning to Pinterest, tweeting, and hundreds of others. Some would argue that



VIEWPOINTS: A Typical Day

How would you describe your interpersonal communications on a typical day?

Table 1.1 Impersonal and Interpersonal Communication

Impersonal Communication	Interpersonal Communication
<p>Social role information: You interact largely on the basis of the social roles you occupy; for example, server and customer, cab driver and passenger.</p>	<p>Personal information: You interact largely on the basis of personally established roles; for example, friends, lovers, parents and children, cousins.</p>
<p>Social rules: You interact according to the social rules defining your interaction; for example, as a server, you would greet the customers, hand them menus, and ask if there was anything else you could do.</p>	<p>Personal rules: You interact according to the rules you have established rather than to any societal rules; a mother and daughter follow the rules they themselves have established over the years.</p>
<p>Social messages: You exchange messages in a narrow range of topics—you talk to the server about food and service, not about your parents' divorce—with little emotion and little self-disclosure.</p>	<p>Personal messages: You exchange messages on a broad range of topics—you talk about food and also about your parents' divorce—with much emotion and self-disclosure.</p>

online communication is today's communication platform; others argue that online communication is tomorrow's communication platform. No one seems to argue that online communication is not here to stay and grow. In this text, face-to-face communication and online/social media communication are integrated for a number of important reasons:

1. It's the way we communicate; we interact face-to-face *and* online. Some interactions are likely exclusively face-to-face, while others are exclusively online. Increasingly, our interactions are with people with whom we communicate both online and offline.
2. Contemporary interpersonal communication can only be understood as a combination of online and offline interaction. The research and theory discussed here on face-to-face and online communication inform each other. Most of the interpersonal theories discussed here were developed for face-to-face interaction but have much to say about online relationships as well.
3. It's part of the skill set that employers expect potential employees to have. As already noted, the ability to communicate orally and in writing (and, of course, that includes online and offline) is consistently ranked among the most important qualities employers are looking for.
4. Both forms of communication are vital to developing, maintaining, and even dissolving relationships. More and more relationships are started and maintained online, with many of them moving to face-to-face interactions if the online interaction proves satisfying.
5. Both forms of communication are important to achieving your goals. For example, your employability will depend, in great part, on how effectively you communicate in your e-mails, in your phone conferences, in your Skype interviews, and in your in-person interviews. Social networking recruiting is perhaps the main means used to hire new employees (Bersin, 2013).

Some computer-mediated communication (for example, e-mail, tweets, or posts on Facebook) is **asynchronous**, meaning that it does not take place in real time. You may send your message today, but the receiver may not read it for a week and may take another week to respond. Consequently, much of the spontaneity created by real-time communication is lost here. You may, for example, be very enthusiastic about a topic when you send your e-mail but practically have forgotten it by the time someone responds. E-mail is also virtually inerasable, a feature that has important consequences and that we discuss later in this chapter.

Through instant messaging, you interact online (essentially) in real time; the communication messages are **synchronous**—they occur at the same time and are similar to phone communication except that IM is text-based rather than voice-based. Through IM you can also play games, share files, listen to music, send messages to cell phones, announce company meetings, and do a great deal else with short, abbreviated messages. Among college students, as you probably know, the major purpose of IM seems to be to maintain “social connectedness” (Kindred & Roper, 2004).

In chat rooms and social networking groups, you often communicate synchronously, when you and a friend are online at the same time, and asynchronously, when you're sending a message or writing on the wall of a friend who isn't online while you're writing. Social networking sites give you the great advantage of enabling you to communicate with people you would never meet or interact with otherwise. Because many of these groups are international, they provide excellent exposure to other cultures, other ideas, and other ways of communicating, and they are a good introduction to intercultural communication.

JOURNAL INTERPERSONAL CHOICE POINT Channels

You want to ask someone for a date and are considering how you might go about this. You regularly communicate with this person face to face, on Facebook, and via phone and e-mail. *Which of these channels would you choose to ask the big question? Why would you select this channel?*

Table 1.2 identifies some of the major similarities and differences between face-to-face and computer-mediated communication.

Interpersonal Communication Is Transactional

Some early theories viewed the communication process as linear (see Figure 1.2). In the linear view of communication, the speaker speaks and the listener listens; after the speaker finishes speaking, the listener speaks. Communication was seen as proceeding in a relatively straight line. Speaking and listening were seen as taking place at different times—when you spoke, you didn’t listen, and when you listened, you didn’t speak.

Table 1.2 Face-to-Face and Computer-Mediated Communication

Throughout this text, face-to-face and computer-mediated communication are discussed, compared, and contrasted. Here is a brief summary of some communication concepts and some of the ways in which face-to-face and computer-mediated communication are similar and different.

Human Communication Element	Face-to-Face Communication	Computer-Mediated Communication
Source		
<i>Presentation of self and impression management</i>	Personal characteristics are open to visual inspection; disguise is difficult.	Personal characteristics are revealed only when you want to reveal them; disguise is easy.
<i>Speaking turn</i>	You compete for speaker time with others; you can be interrupted.	It’s always your turn; speaker time is unlimited; you can’t be interrupted.
Receiver		
<i>Number</i>	One or a few who are in your visual field.	Virtually unlimited.
<i>Opportunity for interaction</i>	Limited to those who have the opportunity to meet.	Unlimited.
<i>Third parties</i>	Messages can be repeated to third parties but rarely with verbatim accuracy.	Messages can be retrieved by others or forwarded verbatim to anyone.
<i>Impression formation</i>	Impressions are based on the verbal and nonverbal cues the receiver perceives.	Impressions are based on text messages and posted photos and videos.
Context		
<i>Physical</i>	Essentially the same physical space.	Can be in the next cubicle or separated by miles.
<i>Temporal</i>	Communication is synchronous; messages are exchanged at the same (real) time.	Communication may be synchronous (as in chat rooms) or asynchronous (as in e-mail).
Channel		
	All senses participate in sending and receiving messages.	Visual (for text, photos, and videos) and auditory.
Message		
<i>Verbal and nonverbal</i>	Words, gestures, eye contact, accent, vocal cues, spatial relationships, touching, clothing, hair, etc.	Words, photos, videos, and audio messages.
<i>Permanence</i>	Temporary unless recorded; speech signals fade rapidly.	Messages are relatively permanent.

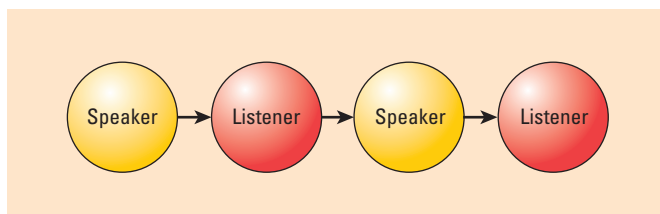


Figure 1.2 The Linear View of Interpersonal Communication

This figure represents a linear view of communication, in which the speaker speaks and the listener listens in turns, but never at the same time.

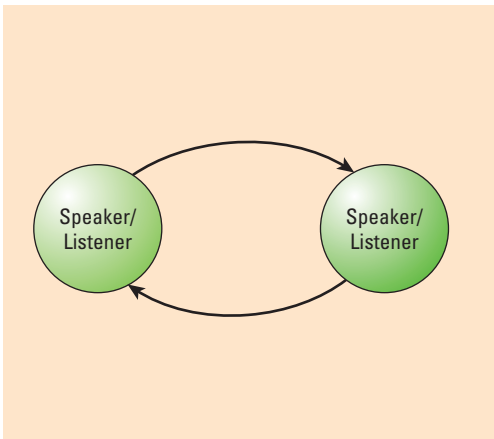


Figure 1.3 The Transactional View of Interpersonal Communication

This figure represents a transactional view, in which each person serves simultaneously as speaker and listener; at the same time that you send messages, you also receive messages from your own communications as well as from the reactions of the other person(s).

A more satisfying view (Figure 1.3), and the one currently held, sees communication as a transactional process in which each person serves simultaneously as speaker and listener. According to the **transactional view**, at the same time that you send messages, you're also receiving messages from your own communications and from the reactions of the other person. And at the same time that you're listening, you're also sending messages. In a transactional view, each person is seen as both speaker and listener, as simultaneously communicating and receiving messages.

In a Nutshell Interpersonal Communication

- involves interdependent individuals
- is inherently relational
- exists on a continuum
- involves verbal and nonverbal messages
- exists in varied forms
- is a transactional process

The Elements of Interpersonal Communication

1.3 Diagram a model of communication containing source–receiver, messages, channel, noise, and context, and define each of these elements.

Given the basic definition of interpersonal communication, let's look at each of the essential elements in interpersonal communication: source–receiver, messages, feedback, feedforward, channel, noise, context, and competence (see Figure 1.4). Along with this discussion, you may wish to visit the websites of some of the major communication organizations to see how they discuss communication. See, for example, the websites of the National Communication Association, the International Communication Association, and the

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication for three major academic associations in communication. URLs for the major communication association are also given on The Communication Blog at <http://tcbdevito.blogspot.com>.

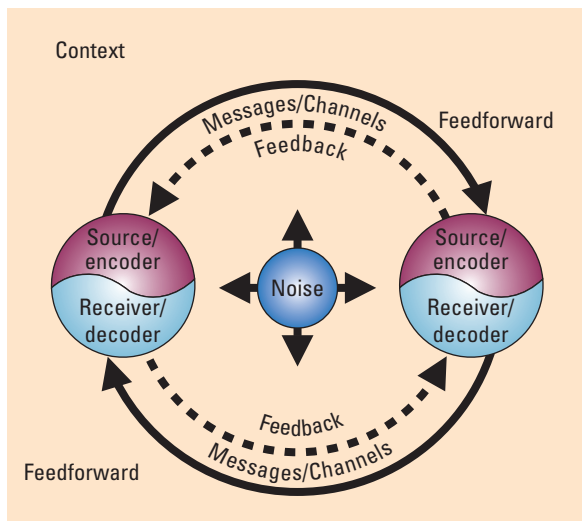


Figure 1.4 The Process of Interpersonal Communication

This model puts into visual form the various elements of the interpersonal communication process. *How would you diagram the interpersonal communication process?*

Source–Receiver

Interpersonal communication involves at least two persons. Each functions as a **source** (formulates and sends messages) and operates as a **receiver** (receives and understands messages). The linked term **source–receiver** emphasizes that each person is both source and receiver. This, of course, does not mean that people serve these functions equally. As you've no doubt witnessed, some people are (primarily) talkers and some people are (primarily) listeners. And some people talk largely about themselves and others participate more in the give and take of communication. In an interesting analysis of Twitter messages, two major types of users were identified (Bersin, 2013; Dean, 2010a):

- **informers** are those who share information and also reply to others; these make up about 20 percent of users.
- **meformers** are those who mainly give out information about themselves; these make up about 80 percent of users.

By putting your meanings into sound waves and gestures, social media posts, facial expressions, or body movements, you're putting your thoughts and feelings into a **code**, or a set of symbols—a process called *encoding*. When you translate those symbols into ideas, you're taking them out of the code they're in, a process called *decoding*. So we can call speakers (or, more generally, senders) **encoders**: those who put their meanings *into* a code. And we can call listeners (or, more generally, receivers) **decoders**: those who take meanings *out of* a code. Since encoding and decoding activities are combined in each person, the term *encoding–decoding* is used to emphasize this inevitable dual function.

Usually you encode an idea into a code that the other person understands; for example, you use words and gestures for which both you and the other person have similar meanings. At times, however, you may want to exclude others; so, for example, you might speak in a language that only one of your listeners knows or use jargon to prevent others from understanding. At other times, you may assume incorrectly that the other person knows your code and unknowingly use words or gestures the other person simply doesn't understand. For interpersonal communication to occur, then, meanings must be both encoded and decoded. If Jamie has his eyes closed and is wearing stereo headphones as his dad is speaking to him, interpersonal communication is not taking place—simply because the messages—both verbal and nonverbal—are not being received.

Messages

For interpersonal communication to exist, **messages** made up of signals or combinations of signals that express your thoughts and feelings must be sent and received. Interpersonal communication may be verbal or nonverbal, but it's usually a combination of both. You communicate interpersonally with words as well as with gestures, emoticons, varied fonts, touch, photos, videos, and audio, for example. Everything about you has the potential to send interpersonal messages, and every message has an **effect**, or outcome. In face-to-face communication, your messages are both verbal and nonverbal; you supplement your words with facial expressions, body movements, and variations in vocal volume and rate. When you communicate through a keyboard, your message is communicated with words as well as with photos and videos, for example. Three important types of messages need to be mentioned here: metamesages, feedback, and feedforward.

METAMESSAGES One very special type of message is the **metamessage**. This type of message refers to other messages; it's a message about a message. Both verbal and nonverbal messages can be metacommunicational. Verbally, you can convey metamesages such as "Do you understand what I'm saying?" Nonverbally, you can wink to communicate that you're lying or being sarcastic. Your interpersonal effectiveness will often hinge on your competence in metacommunication. For example, in conflict situations, it's often helpful to talk about the way you argue or what your raised voice means. In romantic relationships, it may be helpful to talk about what each of you means by "exclusive" or "love." On the job, it's often necessary to talk about the ways people delegate orders or express criticism.

FEEDBACK MESSAGES **Feedback** is a special type of message that conveys information about the messages you send. When you send a spoken or written message to another person or post on a social media site, you get feedback from your own message: You hear what you say, you feel the way you move, you see what you write. On the basis of this information, you may correct yourself, rephrase something, or perhaps smile at a clever turn of phrase.

You also get feedback from others. The person with whom you're communicating is constantly sending you messages that indicate how he or she is receiving and