



# INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION



RELATING TO OTHERS SEVENTH CANADIAN EDITION



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# Interpersonal Communication

Relating to Others

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DEDICATED TO OUR FAMILIES

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# Contents

Preface x

## PART ONE

### Foundations of Interpersonal Communication 1

#### 1 Introduction to Interpersonal Communication 1

##### What Is Interpersonal Communication? 2

- Interpersonal Communication Is a Distinctive Form of Communication 3
- Interpersonal Communication Involves Mutual Influence Between Individuals 4
- Interpersonal Communication Helps Us Manage Our Relationships 4

##### Why Is Interpersonal Communication Important? 5

- Improve Relationships with Family 5
- Improve Relationships with Friends and Lovers 5
- Improve Relationships with Classmates and Colleagues 5
- Improve Your Physical and Emotional Health 6

##### The Communication Process 7

- Models of the Communication Process 8

##### Interpersonal Communication and Technology 9

- Comparing Electronically Mediated Communication with Face-to-Face Communication 10
- Understanding Electronically Mediated Communication 13

##### Principles of Interpersonal Communication 16

- Interpersonal Communication Connects Us to Others 16
- Interpersonal Communication Is Irreversible 16
- Interpersonal Communication Is Complicated 17
- Interpersonal Communication Is Governed by Rules 18
- Interpersonal Communication Involves Both Content and Relationship Dimensions 19

##### Improving Your Own Interpersonal Communication Competence 20

- Become Knowledgeable 21
- Become Skilled 21

- Become Motivated 21
- Become Adaptable 21
- Become Ethical 22
- Become Other-Oriented 22

##### APPLYING AN OTHER-ORIENTATION to Being an Effective Interpersonal Communicator 23

##### STUDY GUIDE: Review, Apply, and Explore 25



#### 2 Interpersonal Communication and Self 27

##### Self-Concept: Who Do You Think You Are? 28

- Mindfulness: Being Consciously Aware 30
- One or Many Selves? 30
- How Your Self-Concept Develops 32

##### Self-Esteem: Your Self-Worth 37

##### Improving Your Self-Esteem 37

- Practise Positive Self-Talk 38
- Visualize a Positive Image of Yourself 38
- Avoid Comparing Yourself with Others 38
- Reframe Appropriately 39
- Develop Honest Relationships 39
- Let Go of the Past 39
- Seek Support 40

##### Self and Interpersonal Relationships 40

- Self and Others 41
- Self and Your Future 41
- Self and Interpretation of Messages 42
- Self and Interpersonal Needs 42

Self and Communication Style 43

Self and Disclosure to Others 44

**APPLYING AN OTHER-ORIENTATION**  
to Self and Interpersonal  
Communication 48

**STUDY GUIDE:** Review, Apply, and  
Explore 49

## 3 Interpersonal Communication and Perception 51

### Understanding Interpersonal Perception 52

Stage One: Selecting 52

Stage Two: Organizing 54

Stage Three: Interpreting 55

### Forming Impressions and Interpreting the Behaviour of Others 56

Interpreting the Behaviour of  
Others 58

### Identifying Barriers to Accurate Interpersonal Perceptions 63

We Stereotype 63

We Ignore Information 63

We Overgeneralize 64

We Oversimplify 64

We Impose Consistency 64

We Focus on the Negative 64

We Blame Others, Assuming They Have  
Control 65

We Avoid Responsibility 66

### Improving Interpersonal Perception Skills 67

Link Details with the Big  
Picture 67

Become Aware of Others' Perceptions  
of You 68

Check Your Perceptions 68

Become Other-Oriented 68

Be Sensitive to Cultural  
Differences 69

**APPLYING AN OTHER-ORIENTATION**  
to Interpersonal Perception 69

**STUDY GUIDE:** Review, Apply, and  
Explore 70

## 4 Interpersonal Communication and Diversity: Adapting to Others 72

### Understanding Diversity: Describing Our Differences 73

Sex and Gender 74

Sexual Orientation 75

Race and Ethnicity 75

Age 76

Social Class 77

### Understanding Culture: Dimensions of Our Mental Software 78

Cultural Elements 79

How We Learn Our Culture 79

Cultural Values 80

### Barriers to Effective Intercultural Communication 83

Ethnocentrism 84

Different Communication  
Codes 85

Stereotyping and Prejudice 85

Assuming Similarity 86

Assuming Differences 87

### Improving Intercultural Communication Competence 88

Developing Bridging  
Strategies 88

Developing Knowledge: Strategies to  
Understand Others Who Are Different  
from Us 89

Developing Motivation: Strategies to  
Accept Others 91

Developing Skills: Strategies to Adapt to  
Others Who Are Different  
from Us 92

**APPLYING AN OTHER-ORIENTATION**  
to Diversity: The Platinum  
Rule 96

**STUDY GUIDE:** Review, Apply,  
and Explore 97

## PART TWO

### Interpersonal Communication Skills 99

#### 5 Listening and Responding Skills 99

##### Listening Defined 100

- Selecting 100
- Attending 101
- Understanding 101
- Remembering 102
- Responding 102

##### Listening Styles 103

- Relational Listening Style 104
- Analytical Listening Style 104
- Critical Listening Style 104
- Task-Oriented Listening Style 104
- Understanding Your Listening Style 105

##### Listening Barriers 105

- Self-Absorption 106
- Unchecked Emotions 106
- Criticizing the Speaker 106
- Differing Speech Rate and Thought Rate 107
- Information Overload 108
- External Noise 108
- Listener Apprehension 109

##### Improving Your Listening Skills 109

- Stop 110
- Look 110
- Listen 111
- Improving Empathic Listening Skills 112
- Improving Critical Listening Skills 114

##### Improving Your Responding Skills 116

- Provide Well-Timed Responses 116
- Provide Useful Information 116
- Avoid Unnecessary Details 116
- Be Descriptive Rather Than Evaluative 116
- Enhancing Your Empathic Responding Skills 117

##### Improving Your Confirmation Skills 120

- Confirming Responses 120
- Disconfirming Responses 122

##### APPLYING AN OTHER-ORIENTATION to Listening and Responding Skills 123

##### STUDY GUIDE:

- Review, Apply, and Explore 124



#### 6 Verbal Communication Skills 126

##### How Words Work 127

- Words Are Symbols 127
  - Words are Denotative and Connotative 128
  - Words Are Concrete and Abstract 129
  - Words Are Arbitrary 129
  - Words Are Culture-Bound 130
- ##### The Power of Words 130
- Words Create Perceptions 130
  - Words Influence Thoughts 131
  - Words Influence Actions 132
  - Words Shape and Reflect Culture 132
  - Words Affect the Quality of Our Relationships 133

##### Communication Barriers: Managing Misunderstandings 134

- Be Aware of Missed Meaning 134
- Be Clear and Precise in the Words You Choose 134
- Be Specific and Avoid Overgeneralizations 135
- Be Aware of Changes in Meaning 136
- Be Aware of Polarizing, “Either-Or” Extremes 137
- Be Unbiased and Sensitive to Others’ Differences 137

##### Words of Support 140

- Describe Your Own Feelings Instead of Evaluating the Behaviour of Others 142
- Solve Problems Instead of Trying to Control Others 143
- Be Genuine Rather Than Manipulative 143
- Empathize Instead of Remaining Detached from Others 143

- Be Flexible Rather Than Rigid Toward Others 144
- Present Yourself as Equal Rather Than Superior 144

**How to Apologize** 145

**How to Be Assertive** 146

- Behaving Assertively: Five Steps 147

## **APPLYING AN OTHER-ORIENTATION**

to Enhancing Your Verbal Skills 149

**STUDY GUIDE:** Review, Apply, and Explore 150

## **7 Nonverbal Communication Skills** 152

**Identifying the Importance of Nonverbal Communication** 153

- Nonverbal Messages Are the Primary Way to Communicate Our Feelings and Attitudes 153
- Nonverbal Messages Are Usually More Believable Than Verbal Messages 154
- Nonverbal Messages Work with Verbal Messages to Create Meaning 155
- People Respond and Adapt to Others Through Nonverbal Messages 155
- Nonverbal Communication Plays a Major Role in Interpersonal Relationships 156

**Understanding Nonverbal Communication Codes** 158

- Body Movement and Posture 158
- Eye Contact 161
- Facial Expressions 162
- Vocal Cues 162
- Personal Space 164
- Touch 165
- Appearance 166

**How to Improve Your Skill in Interpreting Nonverbal Messages** 167

- Look for Dimensions of Meaning in Nonverbal Messages 167
- Use Effective Strategies for Interpreting Nonverbal Messages 170
- Be Aware That the Nonverbal Expression of Emotion Is Contagious 172
- Be Aware of Limitations When Interpreting Nonverbal Messages 173

**How to Improve Your Skill in Expressing Nonverbal Messages** 174

- Be Mindful of Your Nonverbal Behaviour 175
- Observe Others' Reactions to Your Nonverbal Behaviour 175

- Ask Others About Your Nonverbal Behaviour 175

Practise Your Nonverbal Behaviour 175

**APPLYING AN OTHER-ORIENTATION to Nonverbal Communication** 176

**STUDY GUIDE:** Review, Apply, and Explore 177

## **8 Conflict Management Skills** 179

**Conflict Defined?** 180

- Conflict Elements 180
- Conflict as a Process 182
- Conflict Triggers 184

**Conflict Myths** 185

- Conflict Is Always a Sign of a Poor Interpersonal Relationship 185
- Conflict Can Always Be Avoided 186
- Conflict Always Occurs Because of Misunderstandings 186
- Conflict Can Always Be Resolved 186

**Conflict Types** 186

- Pseudo-Conflict: Misunderstandings 186
- Simple Conflict: Different Stands on the Issues 188
- Ego Conflict: Conflict Gets Personal 188

**Conflict and Power** 189

- Power Principles 190
- Power to Persuade 191
- Power Negotiation 192

**Conflict Management Styles** 193

- Avoidance 193
- Accommodation 194
- Competition 195
- Compromise 196
- Collaboration 196

**Conflict Management Skills** 198

- Manage Your Emotions 199
- Manage Information 201
- Be Empathic 203
- Manage Goals 203
- Manage the Problem 204

**APPLYING AN OTHER-ORIENTATION to Conflict Management** 207

**STUDY GUIDE:** Review, Apply, and Explore 208



## PART THREE

## Interpersonal Communication in Relationships 210

## 9 Understanding Interpersonal Relationships 210

## Interpersonal Relationships Defined 211

- Shared Perception 211
- Ongoing Connection 212
- Relational Expectations 212
- Interpersonal Intimacy 212
- Circumstance or Choice 213
- Power 213

## Genesis of Interpersonal Relationships:

## Attraction 214

- Factors Leading to Short-Term Initial Attraction 215
- Sources of Both Initial and Long-Term Attraction 216

## Stages of Interpersonal Relationship

## Development 218

- Relational Escalation 220
- Relational De-Escalation 222

## Theories of Interpersonal Relationship

## Development 224

- Social Exchange Theory 224
- Relational Dialectics Theory 225
- Self-Disclosure and Social Penetration Theory 227

## APPLYING AN OTHER-ORIENTATION

to Understanding Interpersonal Relationships 230

## STUDY GUIDE: Review, Apply, and Explore 231

## 10 Managing Relationship Challenges 233

## Relationship Challenges 234

- Violations of Relational Expectations 234
- Physical Separation and Distance 237
- Relationships That Challenge Social Norms 238

## The Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication and Relationships 240

- Deception 240
- Communication That Hurts Feelings 243
- Jealousy 244
- Unwanted Attention 245
- Relational Violence 248

## Relationship De-Escalation and Termination 249

- Signs of Relationship Problems 249
- Repair and Rejuvenation of Relationships 250

The Decision to End a Relationship 252

How Relationships End 252

Reasons for De-Escalating and Ending Relationships 253

A Model of Ending Relationships 254

Strategies for Ending Relationships 254

Recovery Strategies 256

## APPLYING AN OTHER-ORIENTATION

to Relationship Challenges 257

## STUDY GUIDE: Review, Apply, and Explore 259

## 11 Interpersonal Relationships at Home and at Work 261

## Interpersonal Relationships at Home 262

- Family Defined 262
- Family Types 263
- Two Models of Family Interaction 264
- Improving Family Communication 268
- Specific Family Relationships 270

## Interpersonal Relationships at Work 273

- Workplace Friendships 275
- Workplace Romances 276
- Upward Communication: Talking with Your Boss 278
- Downward Communication: Talking with Your Subordinates 278
- Horizontal Communication: Talking with Your Colleagues 279
- Outward Communication: Talking with Your Customers 279

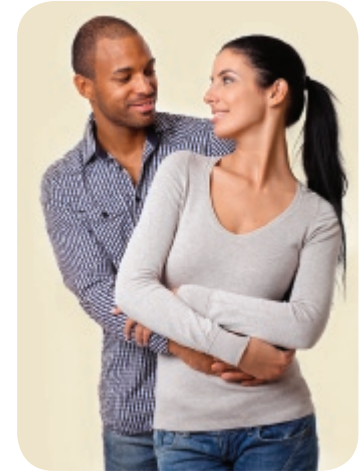
## APPLYING AN OTHER-ORIENTATION

to Family and Workplace Relationships 280

## STUDY GUIDE: Review, Apply, and Explore 281

Notes 283

Index 289



# Special Features

## ADAPTING TO DIFFERENCES: Understanding Others

---

- Cultural Differences Can Lead to Misinterpretation 24
- How Universal Is “The Golden Rule”? 45
- The Power of Perspective 61
- Tao: A Universal Moral Code 91
- Who Listens Better, Men or Women? 107
- Do Men and Women Speak the Same Language? 141
- Cultural and Gender Differences in Interpreting Nonverbal Messages 157
- Masculine and Feminine Conflict Styles 187
- Cultural Differences in Self-Disclosure 217
- Men’s and Women’s Responses to Relationship Challenges 251
- Male and Female Interactions in the Workplace 277

## CANADIAN CONNECTIONS

---

- Can Interpersonal Communication Skills Help My Career? 6
- A Long Journey Home 33
- Michaëlle Jean 59
- Canada’s Increasing Diversity 74
- Are Cell Phones in the Classroom a Valuable Learning Tool or an Unnecessary Distraction? 108
- Labels Are Words That Affect Our Evaluation of Others 132
- Rules for Nonverbal Communication in Canada 158
- Family Violence in Canada 181
- Are People Who Live Alone Lonelier Than People Who Live with a Spouse or Partner? 218
- Is Cyberbullying Against the Law? 250
- Soft Skills in the Workplace 274

## BUILDING YOUR SKILLS

---

- Who Are You? 29
- Dimensions of Your Self 31
- Sociocommunicative Orientation 44
- Enhancing Listening by Identifying the Major Idea and Details of a Message 114
- Practise Using “I” Language 143
- How to Assert Yourself 148
- Practising Nonverbal Perception Checking 172
- Communicating with Prickly People 206
- Graphing Your Relationship Changes 223
- Forgiveness 239
- Friends with a Difference 240
- Identifying Your Family System 265
- Other-Orientation at Home and at Work 280

## E-CONNECTIONS: RELATING TO OTHERS

---

- Communicating Through Text Message 17
- Your “Online Self” and Your “Offline Self” 35
- Stereotyping Others Online 65
- Making Intercultural E-connections 84
- Overcoming Contemporary Listening Challenges 103
- Using Words to Relate to Others Online 148
- Communicating Nonverbal Meta-Messages Online 168
- Managing Conflict Online 198
- Self-Disclosure 227
- Abuses of Electronically Mediated Communication 247
- Networked Families 270

# Preface

**The world does not revolve around you.** While that may seem obvious, we believe that this observation has profound implications for the study of interpersonal communication because at the heart of quality interpersonal relationships is an emphasis on others. A focus on others rather than on oneself has been the hallmark of most volunteer, community, and faith movements in the world for millennia. Yet this book is not about religion or philosophy. It's about how to enhance the quality of your interpersonal communication with others.

This book takes an other-oriented approach to interpersonal communications. Becoming other-oriented is not a single skill but rather a collection of skills and principles designed to increase your sensitivity to and understanding of others. Being other-oriented doesn't mean you abandon your own thoughts, ignore your feelings, and change your behaviour only to please others; that would not only be unethical, it would also be an ineffective approach to developing genuine, honest relationships with others. An other-oriented person is self-aware as well as aware of others. As we stress throughout the book, true empathy, emotional intelligence, and sensitivity are possible only when we feel secure about our own identities.

The importance of being other-oriented was the foundation of the first six Canadian editions of *Interpersonal Communication: Relating to Others*, and it continues as the central theme of the seventh Canadian edition.

## Why You Need This New Edition

---

We have written this book for Canadian college and university students who are seeking to enhance their interpersonal communication and relationships. While retaining the strengths that readers seem to value most—an easily accessible style, an other-oriented approach, and a balance of theory and skills—this new edition gave us the opportunity to add fresh examples and research throughout and to fine-tune every feature, activity, and illustration. Here are five good reasons to give this new edition a close look:

1. **Further integration of learning objectives:** We have refined the learning objectives and coordinated them with each chapter's key topic headings. These pairings are highlighted in the opening section of each chapter.
2. **Increased emphasis on technology:** Our updated and expanded coverage now includes increased discussion of the role and function of new technologies in interpersonal communication. The revised feature *E-Connections: Relating to Others*, included in each chapter, explores the influence of new technologies on interpersonal communication and relationships.
3. **Increased emphasis on diversity:** Inherent in our other-oriented approach is the understanding that people differ in significant ways. It is because of these differences that we need skills and principles that allow us to develop links to other people and encourage us to establish meaningful interpersonal relationships with them.

The updated "*Adapting to Differences: Understanding Others*" features in every chapter present research conclusions and communication strategies for understanding differences. In addition, through examples, illustrations, and research conclusions liberally woven throughout the book, we identify ways to become other-oriented despite differences we encounter in people of other genders or of other cultures or ideologies.

4. **New and updated discussions, research findings, and examples:** New material throughout the book covers such provocative topics as emotional intelligence and how to measure it, hate speech, listening in the 21st century, the dark side of the Internet, meta-messages and online communication, and networked families and co-workers.
5. **Increased and updated Canadian content:** This new edition continues to provide a Canadian context for understanding interpersonal communication to allow Canadian students to see themselves and their environment reflected in the text. This is achieved through the introduction of new and updated examples, photographs, statistics, and stories from contemporary Canadian society, as well as through the updated “*Canadian Connections*” feature, included in every chapter, which presents new information and research.

## Our Partnership with Students and Instructors

---

As important as we think a textbook is, it is only one tool that facilitates teaching and learning. In the seventh Canadian edition of *Interpersonal Communication: Relating to Others*, we continue our tradition of offering a wide variety of instructional resources to help instructors teach and students learn principles and skills of interpersonal communication.

Built into the book is a vast array of pedagogical features:

- Chapter-opening sections highlight the one-to-one correspondence of the learning objectives and chapter outlines.
- Student-friendly Recap features periodically summarize key concepts and terms.
- *Building Your Skills* boxes throughout the text offer practical strategies for applying chapter content to help students improve their own communication skills and relationships.
- Key terms are defined in the margins and are included in a glossary at the end of the book.
- Our Study Guide feature at the end of each chapter gives students the opportunity to review, apply, and explore key chapter concepts through critical thinking questions, questions about ethics, and classroom activities.

### Instructor Supplements

- An Instructor’s Resource Manual includes teaching suggestions, suggested course syllabi, and guidelines for using the complete teaching–learning package.
- A Test Item File is available in Microsoft Word or in computerized format in MyTest for Windows® and Macintosh®.
- PowerPoint® Presentations can be used to enhance lectures and tutorial instruction.

### Student Supplements

The Companion Website for *Interpersonal Communication: Relating to Others* will benefit students and instructors alike. For students, this website provides:

- Multiple choice self-assessment quizzes for practice testing
- Glossary flashcards relevant to the terms in the text

## Acknowledgments

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# 1

## Introduction to Interpersonal Communication

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.” —George Bernard Shaw

### OBJECTIVES

- 1 Compare and contrast definitions of communication, human communication, and interpersonal communication.
- 2 Explain why it is useful to study interpersonal communication.
- 3 Describe the key components of the communication process.
- 4 Compare and contrast communication as action, interaction, and transaction.
- 5 Discuss electronically mediated communication's role in developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships.
- 6 Discuss five principles of interpersonal communication.
- 7 Identify strategies that can improve your communication effectiveness.

### OUTLINE

- What Is Interpersonal Communication?
- Why Is Interpersonal Communication Important?
- The Communication Process
- Interpersonal Communication and Technology
- Principles of Interpersonal Communication
- Improving Your Own Interpersonal Communication Competence

Interpersonal communication is like breathing; it is a requirement for life, and, like breathing, it is inescapable. Unless you live in isolation, you communicate interpersonally every day, whether you're texting a friend, discussing vacation plans with your significant other, or emailing a professor to ask for an extension on an assignment.

Even before we are born, we respond to movement and sound. With our first cry, we announce to others that we are here, and we continue to communicate until our last breath. Even before we can talk, we communicate our feelings, needs, and wants to others, and as we grow, even though many of our messages are not verbalized, we continually send messages to others through our facial expressions, body language, and gestures. Without interpersonal communication, a special form of human communication that occurs as we manage our relationships, people suffer and even die. For this reason, the United Nations has denounced the practice of long-term solitary confinement, as it is considered a form of torture.<sup>1</sup>

Human communication is at the core of our existence. Think of the number of times you communicate with people each day as you work, eat, study, shop, or go about your other daily activities. How many conversations did you have today? How many text messages did you send? How many emails did you exchange? How many times did you post on social media? We spend most of our waking hours engaging in some form of interpersonal communication, and it is through these exchanges that we develop relationships with others.

Because these relationships are so important in our lives, later chapters will focus on the communication skills and principles that explain and predict how we develop, sustain, and sometimes end relationships. We'll explore such questions as the following:

- Why do we like some people and not others?
- How can we interpret other people's unspoken messages with greater accuracy?
- Why do some relationships blossom and others die?
- How can we better manage disagreements with others?
- How can we better understand our relationships with our family, friends, and co-workers?

**communication.** The process of acting upon information.



In face-to-face encounters, we simultaneously exchange verbal and nonverbal messages that result in shared meanings. Through this kind of interrelation, we build relationships with others.

(© Monkey Business Images/Shutterstock)

This chapter charts the course ahead, addressing key questions about what interpersonal communication is and why it is important. We will begin by seeing how our understanding of the interpersonal communication process has evolved, and we will conclude by examining how we initiate and sustain relationships through interpersonal communication.

## What Is Interpersonal Communication?

To understand interpersonal communication, we must begin by understanding how it relates to two broader categories: communication in general and human communication. For decades, scholars have attempted to arrive at a general definition of communication, and yet experts cannot agree on a single one. In the broadest sense, however, we can define **communication** as the process of acting on information.

One person does or says something, and others think or do something in response to the actions or words as they understand them.

To refine our broad definition, we can say that **human communication** is the process of making sense out of the world and sharing that sense with others by creating meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal messages.<sup>2</sup> We learn about the world by listening, observing, tasting, touching, and smelling; then we share our conclusions with others. Human communication encompasses many media, including speeches, songs, letters, books, articles, poems, advertisements, radio and television broadcasts, email, online discussion groups, texts, and tweets.

**Interpersonal communication** is a distinctive, transactional form of human communication involving mutual influence, usually for the purpose of managing relationships. Three essential elements of this definition set the unique nature of interpersonal communication apart from other forms of human communication: interpersonal communication is (1) a distinctive form of communication, which (2) involves mutual influence between individuals and (3) helps us manage our relationships.

## Interpersonal Communication Is a Distinctive Form of Communication

For years, many scholars defined interpersonal communication simply as communication that occurs when two people interact face to face. This limited definition suggests that if two people are interacting, then they are engaged in interpersonal communication. Today, interpersonal communication is defined not just by the number of people who communicate but also by the quality of the communication. Interpersonal communication occurs not when you simply interact with someone, but when you treat the other as a unique human being.<sup>3</sup>

Philosopher Martin Buber influenced our thinking about human communication when he presented the concept of true dialogue as the essence of authentic communication. He described communication as consisting of two different qualities of relationships. An “I–It” relationship, in Buber’s terminology, is an impersonal one; the other person is viewed as an “It” rather than as an authentic, genuine person. Think of all human communication as ranging on a continuum from impersonal to interpersonal communication. **Impersonal communication** occurs when you treat people as objects, or when you respond to their roles rather than to who they are as unique individuals. When you ask a server in a restaurant for a glass of water or respond to a stranger’s advertisement on Kijiji or Craigslist, you are interacting with the role, not necessarily with the person. You know nothing personal about this individual, and he or she knows nothing personal about you.

Interpersonal communication occurs when you interact with another person as a unique, authentic individual rather than as an object or “It.” Buber calls this kind of relationship an “I–Thou” relationship. An “I–Thou” relationship involves true dialogue and is not self-centred. The communicators have developed an attitude toward each other that is honest, open, spontaneous, nonjudgmental, and based on equality rather than superiority.<sup>4</sup> When you chat with your neighbour over coffee, call your mother, or engage in a series of texts with your best friend, you are communicating interpersonally.

Although interpersonal communication is more intimate and reveals more about the people involved than does impersonal communication, not all interpersonal communication involves sharing closely guarded personal information. As we discuss later in the text, there are degrees of intimacy when interacting with others.

**human communication.** The process of making sense of the world and attempting to share that sense with others by creating meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal messages.

**interpersonal communication.** A distinctive, transactional form of human communication involving mutual influence, usually for the purpose of managing relationships.

**impersonal communication.** Communication that occurs when we treat people as objects, or when we respond to their roles rather than to who they are as unique persons.



## RECAP The Continuum Between Interpersonal Communication and Impersonal Communication

### Interpersonal Communication

- People are treated as unique individuals.
- People communicate in an “I–Thou” relationship. Each person is treated as a unique individual.
- There is true dialogue and honest sharing of self with others.
- Interpersonal communication often involves communicating with someone you care about and depend upon, such as a friend, family member, or co-worker.

### Impersonal Communication

- People are treated as objects.
- People communicate in an “I–It” relationship. Each person is reduced to his or her role.
- There is mechanical interaction rather than an honest sharing of feelings.
- Impersonal communication involves communicating with people with whom you share no history and expect no future.

## Interpersonal Communication Involves Mutual Influence Between Individuals

*Mutual influence* means that all partners are affected by the transaction. The degree of mutual influence varies a great deal from transaction to transaction. You probably would not be affected a great deal by a brief smile you receive from a stranger on a bus, but you would be greatly affected by hearing the words “I love you” for the first time from your romantic partner. Long-lasting interpersonal relationships are sustained by a spirit of mutual equality and respect. True dialogue, says researcher Daniel Yankelovich, involves a collaborative climate. It’s not about winning or losing an argument. It’s about being understood and accepted.<sup>5</sup>

Buber asserts that the quality of being fully “present” when communicating with another person is an essential part of an “I–Thou” relationship.<sup>6</sup> To be present is to give your full attention to the other person. The quality of interpersonal communication is enhanced when both you and your communication partner are simultaneously present and focused on each other.

**relationship.** An ongoing connection made with another person through interpersonal communication.

**mass communication.** Type of communication that occurs when one person issues the same message to many people at once; the creator of the message is usually not present and there is virtually no opportunity for listeners to respond to the speaker.

**public communication.** Type of communication that occurs when a speaker addresses a large audience in person.

**small-group communication.** Type of communication that occurs when a group of from 3 to 15 people meet to interact with a common purpose and mutually influence one another.

## Interpersonal Communication Helps Us Manage Our Relationships

A **relationship** is the ongoing connection you make with another person through interpersonal communication. When two individuals are in a relationship, everything that one person says or does influences the other person.

We initiate and form relationships by communicating with others whom we find appealing in some way. When we wish to develop a relationship with someone, we seek to increase our interactions with that person, and we use interpersonal communication continually to maintain the relationship. We also use interpersonal communication to redefine or end relationships.

- **Mass communication** occurs when someone communicates the same message to many people at once, but the creator of the message is usually not physically present, and listeners have virtually no opportunity to respond immediately to the speaker. Messages communicated via radio and TV are examples of mass communication.
- **Public communication** occurs when a speaker addresses a large audience in person.
- **Small-group communication** occurs when a group of, say, 3 to 15 people meet to interact with a common purpose and mutually influence one another. The purpose of the gathering could be to solve a problem, make a decision, learn, or just have fun. While communicating with others in a small group, it is also possible to communicate

interpersonally, that is, to communicate in order to manage a relationship with one or more individuals in the group.

- Finally, **intrapersonal communication** is communication with oneself. Thinking is perhaps the best example of intrapersonal communication. In our discussion of self and communication in Chapter 2, we discuss the relationships between one's thoughts and one's interpersonal communication with others.

## RECAP Comparing Key Definitions

Term	Definition
Communication	The process of acting on information
Human communication	The process of making sense of the world and sharing that sense with others
Interpersonal communication	A distinctive, transactional form of human communication involving mutual influence, usually for the purpose of managing relationships

## Why Is Interpersonal Communication Important?

Why learn about interpersonal communication? Because it touches every aspect of your life. Developing quality interpersonal relationships with others is not only pleasant or desirable; it is vital for your well-being. Learning how to understand and improve interpersonal communication can improve relationships with family, loved ones, friends, classmates, and colleagues, and can enhance the quality of your physical and emotional health.

### Improve Relationships with Family

Relating to family members can be a challenge. The divorce statistics in Canada document the difficulties that can occur when people live in relationships with each other: about half of all marriages end in divorce. While we don't claim that you will avoid all family conflicts if you learn the principles and skills of interpersonal communication, you will be more likely to develop creative, constructive solutions to family conflict if you understand what's happening and can promote true dialogue with your spouse, parent, sibling, or child. Furthermore, family relationships play a major role in determining how you interact with others. Author Virginia Satir calls family communication "the largest single factor determining the kinds of relationships [people make] with others."<sup>7</sup>

### Improve Relationships with Friends and Lovers

How many friends do you have? Are you currently in love or have you been in love before? Developing friendships and falling in love can provide crucial sources of satisfaction and happiness in life. Conversely, the end of a relationship can cause a great deal of stress and can even lead to depression. Studying interpersonal communication may not unravel all the mysteries of romantic love and friendship, but it can offer insight into our behaviour and help us to improve our relationships.

### Improve Relationships with Classmates and Colleagues

Although we choose our friends and lovers, we don't always have the same flexibility in choosing those with whom we work or attend classes, even though we may spend more time with them than with our family and friends. Understanding how relationships develop

**intrapersonal communication.**  
Communication with oneself; thinking.



It is impossible to avoid family conflicts altogether, but strong interpersonal communication skills can help you understand and manage them.

(© Jupiterimages/Thinkstock/Getty Images)

**depression.** A widespread emotional disorder in which the person has problems with sadness, changes in appetite, difficulty sleeping, and a decrease in activities, interests, and energy.

at school and on the job can help us avoid conflict and stress and can increase our sense of satisfaction. Experts agree that relationships with peers have a significant impact on student success at the postsecondary level; in fact, one study concluded that “the student’s peer group is the single most potent source of influence on growth and development during the undergraduate years.”<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, success or failure in a job can often hinge on how well we get along with our supervisor and our peers. Recent studies have shown that training workers to relate and communicate as a team improves quality and productivity in many occupations, and so today more and more workplaces are adopting teamwork as a management strategy. In fact, as we discuss in the following *Canadian Connections* box, the Conference Board of Canada and its partners, including business organizations and training/education partners, have identified teamwork skills as one of the three main areas of essential employability skills.<sup>9</sup> These *Canadian Connections* boxes will highlight Canadian research and issues throughout the text.

## Improve Your Physical and Emotional Health

Research has shown that the lack or loss of a relationship can lead to ill health and even death. Physicians have long observed that patients who are widowed or divorced experience more medical problems, such as heart disease, cancer, pneumonia, and diabetes, than do married people.<sup>10</sup> One Canadian study even found that married retired couples reported happier relationships than older couples where one was retired and the other was still working.<sup>11</sup>

Research findings are similar for mental illness: widowed and divorced individuals are more likely to experience mental illness, especially depression, than those in ongoing relationships.<sup>12</sup> In fact, **depression** is the most commonly diagnosed mental illness.

## Canadian Connections

### Can Interpersonal Communication Skills Help My Career?

If your job search is going to be successful, from the beginning you need to know not just your own goals, but also what employers are looking for. Courses that teach interpersonal communication skills can help you improve your own skills and become a more attractive candidate. The Conference Board of Canada has published a brochure that outlines an Employability Skills Profile based on information gathered from hundreds of Canadian employers. This brochure can assist you in developing various skills.

The brochure summarizes the skills that are in demand under three headings:

Academic Skills, Personal Management Skills, and Teamwork Skills. Under the Personal Management Skills heading, the brochure notes that employers look for those with self-esteem and confidence; who recognize and respect people’s diversity and individual differences; who have a positive attitude toward learning, growth, and personal health; and who have the ability to identify and suggest new ideas to get a job done in a creativeway. Under the Teamwork Skills heading, the brochure discusses such aspects as respecting the thoughts and opinions of others in the group, using conflict-management

strategies to facilitate give-and-take and thereby achieve group results, planning and making decisions with others, and supporting those outcomes.

Although many may view these as “soft skills,” there is no doubt that in an economic climate where getting a job can be challenging, interpersonal communication skills could be the ones that set you apart from other candidates.

In Chapter 11 you will find the Employability Skills presented in full.

Source: Mary Ann McLaughlin, ED399484 95 *Employability Skills Profile: What Are Employers Looking For?* (ERIC Publications). © Steven A. Beebe

The Canadian Mental Health Association has estimated that 15% of the population will have a major depressive episode at some point in their lives.<sup>13</sup> On the positive side, however, establishing a quality social support system can be a major factor in improving and maintaining your health.

All of these findings show that the stress of loneliness can make us sick, but if we have support from people who care about us, we can adjust to life's challenges and surprises. By learning more about effective communication, you are paving the way for closer, more satisfying relationships and a longer, healthier life.

## The Communication Process

Interpersonal communication is a complex process of creating meaning in the context of an interpersonal relationship. This process can occur online as well as face to face. To better understand interpersonal communication as a distinct form of communication, it is useful to examine the basic communication process.

The most basic components of communication include the following elements: source, message, channel, receiver, noise, feedback, and context. Understanding each of these elements can help you analyze your own communication with others as you relate to them in interpersonal situations and other communication contexts. Let's explore these elements in greater detail.

**Source.** The **source** of a message is the originator of the ideas and feelings expressed. The source puts a message into a code, a process called **encoding**. You might see a friend and think to yourself "There's Mike. I want to say hello." You are the source, and you then encode that thought into words ("Hi Mike!") or gestures (a wave).

**Message.** **Messages** are the written, spoken, and unspoken elements of communication to which we assign meaning. You can send a message intentionally (talking to a professor before class) or unintentionally (falling asleep during class), verbally ("Hi. How are you?"), nonverbally (a smile), or in written form (a tweet, a text, or a handwritten note).

**Channel.** The **channel** is the means by which the message is expressed to the receiver. Most people receive messages through a variety of channels that include mediated channels such as text messaging, email, phone, video, or Facebook.

**Receiver.** The **receiver** of the message is the person who interprets the message and ultimately determines whether your message was understood. **Decoding**, the opposite of encoding, occurs when the words or unspoken signals are interpreted by the receiver.

**Noise.** **Noise** is anything that interferes with a message being interpreted as it was intended. If there were no noise, all of our messages would be interpreted accurately. But noise is always present. It can be literal—such as your smartphone beeping to signal an incoming email—or psychological—such as competing thoughts, worries, and feelings that distract us from the message.

**Feedback.** **Feedback** is the response to a message. We talk; someone listens and responds; we respond to their response; and so forth. Without feedback, communication is rarely effective. When you order a large cup of coffee with cream and sugar and the server says in response, "That's a large coffee with cream and sugar, right?" he or she has provided feedback to ensure that the message has been understood correctly. Like other messages,

**source.** The originator of a thought or emotion who puts it into a code that can be understood by a receiver.

**encoding.** The translation of ideas, feelings, and thoughts into a code.

**messages.** The written, spoken, and unspoken elements of communication to which people assign meaning.

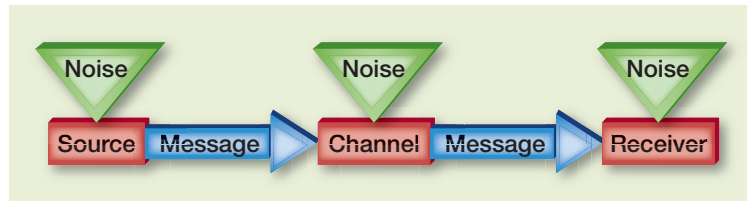
**channel.** The pathway by which messages are sent.

**receiver.** The person who decodes a message and attempts to make sense out of what the source has encoded.

**decoding.** The interpretation of ideas, feelings, and thoughts that have been translated into a code.

**noise.** Information, either literal or psychological, that interferes with the accurate reception of the communication of the message.

**feedback.** The response to a message.

**FIGURE 1.1****A Simple Model of Human Communication as Action**

it can be intentional (your mother hugs you when you announce you're on the dean's list) or unintentional (you blush when someone you like pays you a compliment); verbal (your mother exclaims, "You're on the dean's list? That's wonderful!") or nonverbal (you smile in response to the compliment).

**Context.** **Context** is the physical and psychological environment for communication. All communication takes place in some context, whether you are chatting with a friend at your local coffee shop, emailing your mother, or expressing condolences to your neighbour at his father's funeral.

## Models of the Communication Process

The elements of the communication process are typically arranged in one of three communication models, showing communication as an action, as an interaction, or as a transaction. Let's look at each model in more detail to see how expert thinking about communication has evolved.

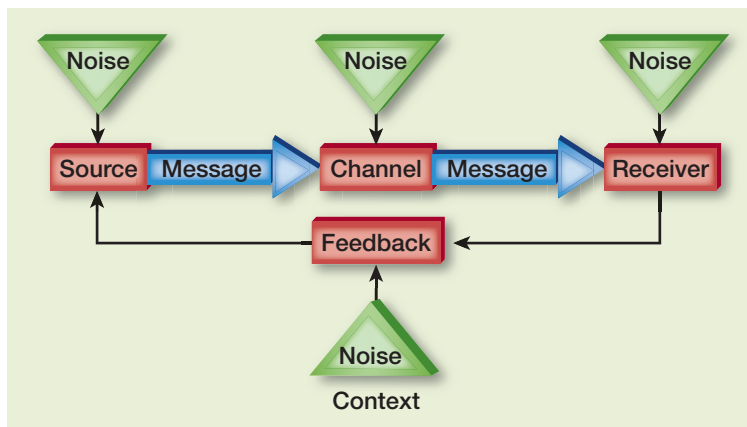
**Communication as Action: Message Transfer.** The oldest and simplest model, shown in Figure 1.1, is communication as action—a transferring of meaning. The question "Did you get my message?" reflects this simple approach to human communication. Communication takes place when a message is sent and received. Period.

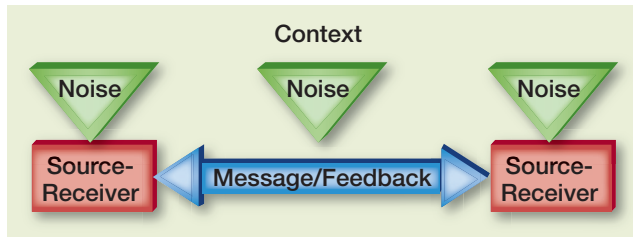
**Communication as Interaction: Message Exchange.** The perspective of communication as interaction adds two elements to the action model: feedback and context. As shown in Figure 1.2, the interaction model is more realistic than the action perspective, but it still has limitations. Although it emphasizes feedback and context, the interaction model still views communication as a linear, step-by-step process. As such, it does not quite capture the complexity of simultaneous human communication.

**context.** The physical and psychological communication environment.

**FIGURE 1.2****A Model for Communication as Interaction**

Interaction models of communication include feedback as a response to a message sent by the communication source and context as the environment for communication.



**FIGURE 1.3****A Model for Communication as Mutual Transaction**

In this model, the source and the receiver of a message experience communication simultaneously.

**Communication as Transaction: Message Creation.** Today, the most sophisticated and realistic model views communication as a transaction in which each element influences all of the other elements in the process at the same time. This perspective acknowledges that when you talk to another person face to face, you are constantly reacting to your partner's responses. In this model, all the components of the communication process are simultaneous. As Figure 1.3 indicates, even as you talk, you are also interpreting your partner's non-verbal and verbal responses.

The transactional approach to communication is based on **systems theory**. A system is a set of interconnected elements in which a change in one element affects all of the other elements. Key elements of any system include *inputs* (all of the variables that go into the system), *throughputs* (all of the things that make communication a process), and *outputs* (what the system produces). From a transactional communication perspective, a change in any aspect of the communication system (source, message, channel, receiver, noise, context, feedback) potentially influences all the other elements of the system. From a systems theory point of view, each element of communication is connected to all other elements of communication.

**systems theory.** Theory that describes the interconnected elements of a system in which a change in one element affects all the other elements.

## RECAP An Evolving Model for Interpersonal Communication

### Human Communication as Action



Human communication is linear, with meaning sent or transferred from source to receiver.

### Human Communication as Interaction



Human communication occurs as the receiver of the message responds to the source through feedback. This interactive model views communication as a linear action-and-reaction sequence of events.

### Human Communication as Transaction



Human communication is simultaneously interactive. Meaning is created based on a mutual, concurrent sharing of ideas and feelings. This model most accurately describes interpersonal communication.

## Interpersonal Communication and Technology

Can you really communicate *interpersonally* with people on a smartphone or over the Internet without meeting them face to face? Yes, of course. You probably communicate this way every day, to both initiate and maintain relationships. When you post your thoughts on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, or use Snapchat or text message to communicate with your friends, you are using **electronically mediated communication (EMC)**.

**electronically mediated communication (EMC).** Communication that is not face to face, but rather is sent via a medium such as a cell phone or the Internet.