



SIXTH CANADIAN EDITION

Interpersonal Communication

Relating to Others

Steven A. Beebe

Texas State University—San Marcos

Susan J. Beebe

Texas State University—San Marcos

Mark V. Redmond

Iowa State University

Terri M. Geerinck

Sir Sandford Fleming College

Lisa Salem-Wiseman

Humber College

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Toronto

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Preface

The world does not revolve around you. While that may seem obvious, we believe that this un-profound observation has profound implications for the study of interpersonal communication: *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.

Becoming other-oriented is a mindful process of considering the thoughts, needs, feelings, and values of others rather than focusing exclusively on oneself. This process involves all the classic principles and skills typically taught in interpersonal communication courses—listening, providing feedback, using conflict management skills and verbal and nonverbal skills—and places additional emphasis on the importance of the perceptions, thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, values, and emotions of others.

The importance of being other-oriented was the foundation of the first five Canadian editions of *Interpersonal Communication: Relating to Others*, and it continues as the central theme of the sixth 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, our 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 six good reasons to give this new edition a close look!

1. **Enhanced other-oriented approach:** The importance of being other-oriented was the foundation of the first five well-received Canadian editions of *Interpersonal Communication: Relating to Others*, and it continues to be the central theme of the sixth edition. Other-orientation has been more fully explored and integrated throughout the book in numerous text discussions and examples, and it is highlighted by several new features that emphasize its importance and its application to everyday communication. We have introduced a new margin feature, called “Being Other-Oriented,” that appears throughout the book; it connects the other-orientation theme to specific discussions, often presenting thought-provoking questions to get students thinking about how other-oriented their own communication is. We have also added a new summary section to the end of each chapter, called “Applying an Other-Orientation to . . . ,” which discusses essential applications and applies the other-orientation specifically to the chapter content.

2. **Increased emphasis on technology:** The line between face-to-face and electronically mediated communication (EMC) has become increasingly blurred as we text, email, and Skype with our friends and share the latest news and views via Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter, and blogs. In this edition we explore the ever-increasing role of technology in interpersonal communication and its implications for our daily communication and relationships with others. While this content is integrated throughout the text, we have also added an extensive discussion of EMC in Chapter 1. In addition, we have developed a new feature in this edition, “Relating to Others in the 21st Century,” which focuses on research conclusions about the ways in which technology is changing how we relate to and interact with others. It also offers practical applications of research relating to such issues as online stereotyping and what to self-disclose online.
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 last two decades have brought a significant expansion of our understanding of the role of differences in culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, political perspectives, and other points of view in people’s ability to connect with others.

Communication occurs when people find commonalities in meaning that transcend their differences. In a revised Chapter 4 (formerly Chapter 8), “Interpersonal Communication and Cultural Diversity,” we not only identify barriers to competent intercultural communication but also present strategies to bridge the chasm of differences that too often divide rather than unite people. In addition, we distill research conclusions and communication strategies for understanding differences in the “Understanding Diversity” features in every chapter. But our discussion of diversity is not merely window dressing; 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 the other gender or of other cultures or ideologies.

4. **New Review, Apply, and Explore feature at the end of each chapter:** New end-of-chapter material includes key terms with page numbers, critical thinking questions and questions about ethics, application activities, and lists of relevant resources help you review, apply, and explore key chapter concepts.
5. **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.
6. **Increased and updated Canadian content:** *Interpersonal Communication* continues to supply Canadian contexts to provide “at home” relevance to all the topics covered in the book and to facilitate personal identification with these lessons by Canadian students. These objectives are achieved through the following features:
 - New and updated examples, photographs, statistics, and stories to reflect contemporary Canadian society
 - Updated “In Canada . . .” boxes reflecting new information and research

- Excerpts from reports of noted Canadian research institutions
- Presentation of relevant Canadian statistics
- Quotations and anecdotes from prominent Canadians
- Photos that are identifiably Canadian (e.g., Canadian personalities, sports figures, locations)

Our Partnership with Instructors

As important as we think a textbook is, it is only one tool that facilitates student learning. In the sixth 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:

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- Comprehensive outlines of key content
- “Understanding Diversity” features that highlight applications of interpersonal communication in a diverse world
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- New “Becoming Other-Oriented” features that help students understand the signature theme of the book
- New “Relating to Others in the 21st Century” features to help students understand how technology changes how we relate to others.
- Liberal use of “Recap” features to help students remember the essence of key concepts and terms
- Icons within the text that link the content of the book to a wealth of interpersonal communication resources and practice material available online at MyCommunicationLab
- A marginal glossary of all boldface terms in the text
- End-of-chapter questions that focus on critical thinking and ethics to spark thought and class discussion

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MyCommunicationLab also includes the Pearson eText, which gives students access to the text whenever and wherever they have access to the Internet. eText pages look exactly like the printed text and offer powerful new functionality for students and instructors. Users can create notes, highlight text in different colours, create bookmarks, zoom, click hyperlinked words and phrases to view definitions, and view the text in single-page or two-page format. The Pearson eText allows for quick navigation to key parts of the eText using a table of contents and provides full-text search. The eText may also offer links to associated media files, enabling users to access videos, animations, or other activities as they read the text.

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