Chapter 13 Outline

(Italicsized words are key words)

I. The nature of intimacy is an interaction pattern, as both your messages and your partner’s responses make a conversation an intimate interaction.
   A. There are characteristics of intimate conversations.
      1. Emotional disclosures reveal sensitive, private, and personally risky information, signaling to our partners the desire for intimacy.
      2. Mutual understanding involves partners comprehending what the other person is saying from both their own and their partner’s point of view.
      3. Warm feelings are the positive feelings you have about yourself and your partner during and immediately after an interaction, including happiness, excitement, yearning, peace, gratitude, contentment, desire, and love.
      4. Cohesiveness is a sense of togetherness that we develop from sharing time, activities, and relationships with others, and creating a shared identity.
         a. Intimate relationships are characterized by partners who share regular intimate interactions, feel affection for each other, and trust each other, and are cohesive.

II. Families are made up of people who share their lives over long periods of time bound by ties of marriage, blood, or commitment, legal or otherwise, who consider themselves a family, and who share a significant history and anticipated future of functioning in a family relationship.
   A. There are two fundamental dimensions of parents’ communication with their children.
      1. Nurturing parental communication involves parental messages that encourage a child’s physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development.
      2. Controlling parental communication involves parental messages that attempt to influence or regulate a child’s behavior.
   B. Depending on how consistently and appropriately caregivers respond to their needs for nurturance, infants develop different working models of attachment, mental models of whether others are trustworthy and whether they themselves are worthy of care.
      1. Secure attachment is the belief that they are worthy of care and that others can be trusted to provide it.
      2. Anxious-ambivalent attachment—the belief that they are not worthy of care and that others cannot be trusted.
      3. Avoidant attachment—the belief that they are worthy of care but that others are untrustworthy.
      4. Attachment styles are adult perceptions of self-worth and trust in others.
         a. A secure attachment style is having high self-worth and trusting others.
b. A *dismissive attachment style* is characterized by high self-worth but lack of trust in others.
c. A *preoccupied attachment style* combines low self-worth with high trust in others.
d. A *fearful attachment style* involves the combination of low self-worth and low trust in others.

C. There are three primary styles of parenting that differ in their approaches to discipline and to nurturance.
   1. A *permissive parenting style* involves moderate to high levels of nurturing but little control over children’s behavior.
   2. An *authoritarian parenting style* combines high levels of control with low levels of nurturing.
   3. An *authoritative parenting style* is characterized by firm control balanced with ample nurturing.

D. Parental communication also affects children by providing a model of communication.

E. Communication varies across types of family relationships.
   1. *Fictive kin*—people who are considered family members even though there is no genetic or marital tie.
   2. When younger family members speak to elder ones, they often *over-accommodate*, excessively adapting their communication style to the perceived needs or desires of the older person.

III. There are some guidelines that can help improve communication in the family.
   A. Keep the lines of communication open by creating opportunities for intimate communication.
   B. Respect individual interests and accomplishments.
   C. Recognize and adapt to change to allow all the family members to grow.

IV. Friendships are voluntary, platonic relationships characterized by equality and reciprocity, and five groups of communication skills are especially important for friendships.
   A. *Initiation*—friendships begin and are maintained when you or your partner makes the first move to get in touch with the other or start a conversation.
   B. *Responsiveness*—friends are sensitive and aware of their partners. Listening and responding skills help you focus on your friends’ needs and react appropriately.
   C. *Self-disclosure*—because friends share personal information and feelings with each other, a friendship is unlikely to form if people discuss only abstract ideas or surface issues.
   D. *Emotional support*—people expect their friends to comfort and support them.
   E. *Conflict management*—friends will inevitably disagree about ideas or behaviors.

V. *Close friendships* can be the most satisfying lifelong relationships.
   A. Male–male relationships regard practical help, mutual assistance, and companionship as indicators of caring.
1. One interpretation is that men’s friendships are not as intimate as women’s, or alternatively, that research inappropriately judges men’s friendships by feminine standards.

2. Men may use covert intimacy, which involves showing closeness, trust, and equality through the use of mild insults, competition, and put-downs.

B. Female–female relationships are marked by mutual disclosure with conversation that involves topical, relational, and, personal topics.

VI. Long-term relationships include marriage and other life partnerships.

A. There are three factors that define long-term relationships: independence, ideology, and communication.
   1. Independence is defined as the extent to which the partners share their feelings with each other.
   2. Ideology is the extent to which the partners adhere to long-established belief systems.
   3. Communication is the extent to which they seek to avoid or engage in conflict as they interact.

B. Marriage styles are defined by the three factors that define long-term relationships.
   1. Traditional couples are highly interdependent and characterized by high levels of sharing and conflict avoidance.
   2. Independent couples are interdependent, willing to engage in conflict, and hold nonconventional marriage values.
   3. Separate couples are less interdependent than their counterparts, tend to avoid conflicts, and engage in less sharing.
   4. None of these styles is better than the others, and in approximately one-third of married couples each spouse has a different marital style, such as “separate-traditionals.”

C. There are three common characteristics of successful long-term relationships.
   1. Mutual respect is treating each other with dignity and valuing one another.
   2. A presence of a shared plan or life vision involves talk that includes “we” statements.
   3. A comfortable level of closeness occurs when couples spend a mutually satisfying amount of time with each other.

D. Through positive communication, romantic relationships can become stronger.
   1. Show affection through affectionate communication, behavior that portrays feelings of fondness and positive regard for another.
   2. Use symbols and rituals to display your commitment.
   3. Talk about sex.

VII. Intimate relationships can bring us great joy, but there is a dark side of intimacy.

A. Relational uncertainty occurs when people feel doubt about the nature of a relationship because of a lack of clarity, mismatched dialectical tensions, and uncertainty about the future of the relationship.

B. Possessiveness is the desire to control another person in order to ensure that he or she is one’s exclusive partner; it can be caused by jealousy, which is an intense
feeling of suspicion that one’s partner values, likes, or loves someone else more than oneself.

IX. Digital communication skills in personal relationships
1. We use social media to strengthen our connections.
2. Relationships are characterized by media multiplexity—meaning that we carry out those relationships through more than one form of social media.
   i. Those in closer relationships use more forms of social media.
   ii. This explains the presence of varying strengths in ties.
   iii. **Strong ties** are relationships that exhibit behavior that reflects heightened emotion, interdependence, intimacy, and high levels of closeness.
   iv. **Weak ties** are casual contacts that are more loosely connected to an individual’s social network.
3. Maintaining relationships primarily through social media is related to weak ties.

X. Initiating relationships
1. Social networks are used to establish new relationships.
   i. These social networks are home to **latent ties**, potential relationships within a social circle that are present but have not been activated.
   ii. People are also explicitly seeking out new relationships using social media through dating sites.
2. Reasons for forming new relationships online
   i. People are intrinsically motivated to reduce their uncertainty and to find people who have similarities with them.
   ii. **Social information processing (SIP) theory**: Our need to reduce uncertainty will encourage us to adapt our communication in online settings to reveal personal information about ourselves and to seek information from others.
      1. SIP is more likely to continue when interactions are longer or if there is a high expectation of future interactions.
      2. SIP further suggests that online relationship development might require more time to develop than traditional interpersonal relationships.
3. Challenges in online relationship development
   i. **Hyperpersonal communication theory** posits that digital interactions become overly intimate because the context gives communicators different advantages.
      1. Communicators can strategically develop their presentation of self.

This can happen in communication, photographs, and other forms.