Chapter 12 Outline

(Iitalicized and bolded 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. **Intimate relationships** are those that have highly interdependent partners who are committed to each other, understand and trust one another deeply, and disclose in depth as well as breadth.
   B. **Intimate interactions** are a series of conversations between partners that nurture interdependence, commitment, understanding, trust, and disclosure.

II. There are three types of close relationships: long-term romantic relationships, family relationships, and friendships.
   A. **Long-term romantic relationships (LTRRs)** are those enduring romantic relationships that are intimate and where partners have made some type of long-term commitment to each other.
      1. There are characteristics of successful long-term romantic relationships.
         a. Mutual respect, which is showing regard or consideration for your partner, that person’s point of view, and that person’s rights.
         b. Presence of a shared plan or life vision
         c. Comfortable level of closeness. Partners in LTRRs experience a comfortable level of closeness when they are satisfied with the amount and quality of their romantic encounters, affection displays, and time they spend together.
      2. There are challenges in long-term relationships.
         a. Maintaining intimacy
            1.) **Relational maintenance** is exchanging messages or behaving in ways that keep a relationship at a desired level of intimacy, satisfaction, and health.
            2.) **Routine relational maintenance** happens when messages and behaviors that are performed without any deliberate intention to affect the relationship have the effect of preserving the intimacy.
            3.) **Strategic relational maintenance** happens when messages and behaviors are deliberately performed in order to maintain the level of intimacy in the relationship.
         b. During LTRRs partners can expect to encounter life transitions, or major events that not only affect one partner, but also require adaptation within the relationship.
            1.) It can cause relational uncertainty, which is lack of confidence in the relationship itself.
            2. A second potential problem that may arise from life transitions is interference, when one partner’s actions or choices create obstacles for the other.
         c. Negotiating equitable distribution of work
            1.) The goal should be to achieve an egalitarian relationship where partners agree to what each will contribute to their shared life and that their individual contributions are equally valued.
      d. Sustaining affection and desire
   B. Today, family can be defined as “a self-defined group of intimates who create and maintain themselves through their own interactions and their interactions with others; a family may include both voluntary and involuntary relationships; it creates both literal and symbolic internal and external boundaries, and it evolves through time.
      1. Parent-child relationships are the most formative relationships in the lives of children.
         a. 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** enables people to easily form intimate relationships because they have high self-worth and trust others because of their childhood experiences.
   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.

b. There are two fundamental dimensions of parents’ communication with their children.

1.) **Nurturing messages** involve parental messages that encourage a child's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development.
2.) **Controlling messages** involve parental messages that attempt to influence or regulate a child’s behavior.
   a.) High levels of control with low levels of nurturing characterize the **authoritarian parenting style**; order and tradition, respect, and obedience of parents are valued and reinforced through punishment.
   b.) The **permissive parenting style** is characterized by moderate to high levels of nurturing but little control over children’s behavior.
   c.) Finally, the **authoritative parenting style** is characterized by firm control balanced with ample nurturing.

2. Families vary in two orientations toward communication: conversation orientation and conformity orientation.
   a.) **Conversation orientation** refers to the richness of family interaction.
   b.) **Conformity orientation** refers to the extent of a family’s willingness to listen to and value diverse ideas, and the degree to which family members are encouraged to think and behave independently.

3. Even when parents are not directly interacting with their children, they are providing a working model of communication for children to follow.
4. Communication varies across types of family relationships.
   a.) **Fictive kin**—people who are considered family members even though there is no genetic or marital tie.
5. 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.
C. Friendships are voluntary, platonic relationships characterized by equality and reciprocity, and five groups of communication skills are especially important for friendships.
   1. 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.
   2. Responsiveness—friends are sensitive and aware of their partners. Listening and responding skills help you focus on your friends’ needs and react appropriately.
   3. 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.
   4. Emotional support—people expect their friends to comfort and support them.
   5. Conflict management—friends will inevitably disagree about ideas or behaviors.

D. There are differences between how women and men conduct their friendships.
   1. Male–male relationships regard practical help, mutual assistance, and companionship as indicators of caring.
      a.) 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.
      b.) Men may use covert intimacy, which involves showing closeness, trust, and equality through the use of mild insults, competition, and put-downs.
   2. Female–female relationships are marked by mutual disclosure with conversation that involves topical, relational, and personal topics.

E. Most of us have cross-sex friendships, or platonic (non-romantic) friendships with people of the opposite sex.
   1. One major complication that can arise in platonic friendships is sexual attraction.
   2. Friends with benefits relationships are friendships that have a physical sexual component but are not intended to be romantic. People in these relationships report the primary advantage as being able to have sex with a trusted partner, while avoiding commitment, and the primary disadvantage as developing unreciprocated romantic feelings for the other person.

III. Intimate relationships can bring us great joy, but there is a dark side of intimacy.
   A. Sexual infidelity occurs when people in LTRRs engage in sexual activity with someone other than their partners.
   B. Emotional infidelity occurs when one partner develops romantic feelings toward someone else. The two types of infidelity may occur separately or together.
   C. Relational jealousy is an emotional reaction to the belief you might lose a valued relationship to a third party.
      1. Possessiveness is the desire to control another person in order to ensure that he or she is one’s exclusive partner.

IV. Digital communication skills in personal relationships
   A. We use social media to strengthen our connections.
   B. Relationships are characterized by media multiplexity—meaning that we carry out those relationships through more than one form of social media.
      1. Those in closer relationships use more forms of social media.
      2. This explains the presence of varying strengths in ties.
      3. Strong ties are relationships that exhibit behavior that reflects heightened emotion, interdependence, intimacy, and high levels of closeness.
      4. Weak ties are casual contacts that are more loosely connected to an individual’s social network.
      5. Maintaining relationships primarily through social media is related to weak ties.
   C. Social networks are used to establish new relationships.
1. These social networks are home to *latent ties*, potential relationships within a social circle that are present but have not been activated.

2. People are also explicitly seeking out new relationships using social media through dating sites.

D. There are challenges in online relationship development

1. The ability to present yourself in a “better-than-real” way contributes to some online relationships becoming *hyperpersonal*, or intense and intimate beyond what would occur if the relationship were conducted face-to-face.

2. Communicators can strategically develop their presentation of self.