

## Chapter 6 Outline

(Italicized words are key words)

- I. There are different types of relationships.
  - A. A *relationship* is a set of expectations two people have for their behavior based on the pattern of interaction between them.
    1. A *good relationship* is one in which the interactions are satisfying to and healthy for all involved.
    2. An *abusive relationship* is a relationship in which the interactions are physically, mentally, or emotionally harmful to one or both partners.
- II. There are three main functions of communication in a relationship.
  - A. The *constitutive function* means that a relationship consists of the sum of all of the messages partners have exchanged.
  - B. The *instrumental function* of a relationship means that the communication messages exchanged in a relationship are the \_\_\_\_\_ means through which we accomplish our personal and our \_\_\_\_\_ relationship goals.
  - C. The *indexical function* of relationships means that embedded in \_\_\_\_\_ exchanged messages are measures of who is in control, how much \_\_\_\_\_ partners trust each other, and the level of intimacy in the \_\_\_\_\_ relationship.
- III. There are multiple ways to describe relationships.
  - A. An *impersonal relationship* is when two individuals know each other and have a series of interactions.
  - B. A *personal relationship* is one where the individuals care about each other, share large amounts of information with each other, and meet each other's interpersonal needs.
  - C. *Voluntary relationships* are freely chosen people with whom we interact.
  - D. *Involuntary relationships* are those with whom we interact because we have no choice but do so.
  - E. *Platonic relationships* are those in which the partners are not sexually attracted to each other or choose not to act on their sexual \_\_\_\_\_ attraction.
  - F. In *romantic relationships* partners act on their mutual sexual attraction.
- IV. Types of relationships are defined by familiarity or closeness.
  - A. An *acquaintance* is someone we know by name and talk with when the opportunity arises but with whom we have limited interactions.
  - B. Over time acquaintances may become friends, which are people with whom we have voluntarily negotiated more personal relationships.
  - C. *Close friends or intimates* are those few people with whom we share a high degree of commitment, trust, interdependence, disclosure, and affection.
- V. There are multiple dimensions of relationships.
  - A. The level of *interdependence* between individuals in a relationship will determine how one person's behavior affects another.
  - B. The amount of *breadth* in a relationship is due to the variety of activities and information partners share as well as the amount of contexts.

C. Relationships vary depending on the amount and nature of self-disclosure and feedback, known as *depth*.

D. *Commitment* is how much partners want to, feel that they should, and feel that they must continue the relationship.

E. *Understanding* and *predictability* increases as one becomes an expert about the other's feelings and behaviors.

F. Partners develop a personalized language and scripts unique to them, called *communication code change*.

G. *Shared social networks* increase along with how much the partners' interactions and relationships with other people overlap, as social network is the structure of a couple's relationship.

H. *Interpersonal trust* is the extent to which partners believe that they know what to expect from the relationship partner, know how they are supposed to act, and know that they want to act according to expectations.

## II. Self-disclosure and feedback occur in relationships.

A. As people interact in a relationship, they share things about themselves and observations about the other person.

1. *Self-disclosure* is when one shares biographical information, personal ideas, and feelings.

2. *Feedback* is when one provides verbal and physical responses to others.

3. The *Johari window* is a visual framework used to explain the extent and connection between self-disclosure and feedback in a relationship and is divided into different panes.

a. The open pane is information that one knows about oneself.

b. The secret pane contains all of those things that you know about yourself but have chosen to maintain as private.

c. The blind pane is the place for information that the other person knows about you, but about which you are unaware.

d. The unknown pane contains information about you of which neither you nor your partner are aware.

B. The role of self-disclosure varies in relationships.

1. According to *social penetration theory*, self-disclosure is integral to all stages of relationships, but the nature and type of self-disclosure change over time as people move from being strangers to being intimates.

2. There are some guidelines for self-disclosure to help you decide when and what to disclose.

a. Self-disclose the kind of information that you want others to disclose to you.

b. Self-disclose information appropriate for the type of relationship you have.

c. Self-disclose more intimate information only when you believe the disclosure represents an acceptable risk.

d. Be sensitive to your partner's ability to absorb your disclosure.

e. Reserve intimate or very personal self-disclosures for ongoing relationships.

f. Continue intimate self-disclosure only when it is reciprocated.

III. Relationships have life cycles, as they change over time.

A. The movement from one stage of a relationship to another is usually associated with a *turning point event*, any event or occurrence that marks a relationship's transition from one stage to another.

B. There are stages of relationship development.

1. Stage One occurs in beginning relationships, and according to *predicted outcome value theory*, in our early conversations with potential relationship partners, we gather information to predict whether the benefits of future interactions will outweigh the costs.

a. The second, or personal phase, of beginning a relationship is characterized by conversations that move beyond basic demographic information exchange as we begin to disclose somewhat more personal stories and relate critical incidents in our lives.

b. Some partners will transition into the third or exit phase of the beginning relationship stage, where they will continue to meet and invest in the relationship with self-disclosures.

2. Stage Two of developing relationships is characterized by choosing to continue investing our time in pursuing conversation, sharing joint activities, and engaging in deeper, reciprocated self-disclosure with our partner; two theories can help describe

which we choose to develop.

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a. *Interpersonal needs theory* proposes that the trajectory of a relationship depends on how well each person meets the interpersonal needs of the other person.

1. *Affection need* is the need to express and receive love; people vary from being "underpersonal" and avoiding close ties and showing emotions, to being "personal" and expressing and receiving affection easily, to being "overpersonal" and thriving on establishing "close" relationships with everyone.

2. *Inclusion need* is the need to be in the company of other people; people differ in the amount of interaction with others that they need.

3. *Control need* is the need to influence the events and people around us and varies from abdicrats, people who shun control, to autocrats, who feel they must be in charge, while "democrats" fall between the two, with a need to lead at certain times and follow at others.

b. The *social exchange theory* proposes that relationships can be understood in terms of the exchange of rewards and costs that takes place during interactions.

1. *Relationship costs* are the outcomes that a person does not want to occur.
2. *Relationship rewards* are the outcomes that are valued by a person.
3. The third stage of sustaining relationships involves behaviors such as prosocial behaviors, observing ceremonial occasions, spending time with mutual friends, and sharing tasks.
4. Three dialectics are common to most relationships: the tension between autonomy and connection, openness and closedness, and novelty and predictability.

c. *Relational dialectics* are the relational pulls that exist both within the relationship itself and among the individuals in the relationship.

1. *Openness* is the desire to share intimate ideas and feelings with one's partner and in one's relationship—*closedness* is the desire to maintain privacy.
2. *Autonomy* is the desire to act and make decisions independent of one's partner—*connection* is the desire to link one's actions and decisions with another person.
3. *Novelty* is the desire for originality, freshness, and uniqueness in a partner's behavior or in the relationship—*predictability* is the desire for consistency, reliability and dependability.

d. There are four strategies to manage the relational dialectics of autonomy-connection, openness-closedness, and novelty-predictability.

1. *Temporal selection* is the strategy of choosing one side of a dialectical contraction while ignoring the other for a period of time.
2. *Topical segmentation* is the strategy of choosing certain areas in which to satisfy one desire while choosing other areas to satisfy the opposite desire.
3. *Neutralization* is the strategy of compromising between the desires of one person and the desires of the other.
4. *Reframing* is the strategy of changing perceptions about the level of dialectical tensions.

3. Relationship decline occurs in some relationships, and it is associated with a decrease in interdependence, depth, breadth, commitment, frequency of communication, and trust.
  - a. A dissatisfying relationship may be ignored.
  - b. Partners can decide to talk about their relational dissatisfaction.
  - c. Partners may consciously disengage from the relationship.
  - d. As a relationship deteriorates and can no longer be maintained, it may end and possibly result in a ***relationship transformation***, which is continuing to interact and influence a partner through a different type of relationship after one type has ended.

- IX. It's important to consider how we present ourselves to others through social media.
  1. Remember media richness theory.
  2. Do a cost-benefit analysis.
  3. Keep abreast of rapidly evolving social media technologies.
  4. Also consider the human factor in using social media.
    - i. Self-disclosure provides opportunities for connection.
    - ii. Remember that miscommunication can occur.
    - iii. Convenience is an opportunity and a challenge.