

# Interpersonal Skills in Organizations

Seventh Edition

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## INTERPERSONAL SKILLS IN ORGANIZATIONS, SEVENTH EDITION

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# Dedication

From Suzanne:

To my father, Stan Cooper, who was a model of strength, courage, and perseverance; you are forever in my heart. To my children, Gabby and Alex, who occasionally accompany me as we explore the globe and whose humanity and compassion for others continue to make me proud. To my friends, colleagues, and loved ones, who have been a source of inspiration, renewal, and support.

From Karen:

To Courtney Price, who was a vibrant cheerleader in everything she undertook, and her husband Gordon, a wonderful foil to her exuberance. To my mother-in-law Peggy Dowd, from whom I am learning much about the power of a positive attitude in the face of adversity. To my husband Tom, without whom this book could not have been written. To my family, friends and current and former students and colleagues from whom I learn about interpersonal skills each day.

From Beth:

To my husband and best friend, Jeff, who has always been the loving and stabilizing element in my life for over thirty years. To my sons, Andrew and Nicholas, who are aggressively tackling their goals—I am so proud of these thoughtful and caring young men. To my current and former colleagues who inspire me to continuously search and push for positive change.

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# Preface

## Birth of an Idea—Fast-Forward 20 Years

Over 20 years ago, while we were all teaching at James Madison University, a group of executives, who served as the College of Business dean's board of advisors at the university, identified a critical ingredient missing in most business school graduates. The executives found that while students were technically competent—they could read a balance sheet, do a market analysis, and develop cash flow projections—many graduates lacked interpersonal skills or the ability to work effectively with others. The executives created a wish list of “soft skills,” faculty were hired, and the Interpersonal Skills course was born. Since that time, thousands of students have taken part in this required undergraduate course.

Now 20 years later, the need to hone your interpersonal skills is just as important. The terms “soft skills” or “people skills” are now being replaced with the term “essential skills.” And even with the influx of artificial intelligence and the increase of training programs focused more on technical skills, there remains a consensus that interpersonal skills are crucial for getting the work done. Employers need people who can perform the technical tasks while being able to collaborate with others to achieve superior results.

## “I Want to Buy This Book for My Boss”

As our colleagues and students have heard about this book, a common response is not simply “Where can I buy this book,” but “My boss could use this—can you send him (or her) a copy?” The truth is this book is very relevant to a variety of readers. While it was written primarily with an undergraduate student audience in mind, it is also used, in whole or part, in corporate training programs. Each of the authors is experienced working with graduate students, adult learners, working managers, and senior executives. In addition to our current teaching and research responsibilities, one or more of us has been a management consultant, a corporate trainer, an internal organization development consultant, an assistant dean at a top-tier graduate business school, or a small business owner. Because of the depth of experience we offer, we are convinced that the material, with slight modification, is very appropriate for graduate students, adult learners, and managers as well as for undergraduate students. In short, this book is appropriate for anyone who wants to improve his or her ability to interact with others in the workplace.

## A Unique Focus on Developing Managerial and Interpersonal Skills

In this textbook, we have included certain design elements in order to:

- Offer a variety of activities and experiential elements to meet many types of instructional needs.
- Provide coverage of areas such as diversity, project management, facilitation, and personal goal setting, which are sometimes missing or limited in other textbooks.
- Maintain an academic standard appropriate for an undergraduate audience; yet with minor adjustments the material can be utilized at a graduate or professional training level.
- Use direct and action-oriented language in order to blend academic research with practical application for each skill set.

## Emphasis on Both Personal and Professional

Some texts focus solely on managerial skills but provide little if any assistance in helping the reader understand how understanding him- or herself (intrapersonal effectiveness) relates to interpersonal and managerial effectiveness. The premise and sequencing of our book is that for students to be successful as managers in business, they must first have a solid understanding of self and how the self interacts with others to facilitate organizational success. The chapters and units are designed to be interchangeable so they can be easily rearranged and presented to fit many types of courses. Accordingly, we incorporate information on personal qualities needed for success in business and provide personal examples throughout the book focusing on family and other relationships alongside professional examples focusing on the workplace.

## Balance between Theory and Practice

Our book offers a balance between theory and application. The skill sets addressed in this book are timeless. We don't focus on fads but on tried-and-true principles that are proven to help individuals succeed in organizations. In our experience, students

and managers benefit by having some conceptual background on the topic of interpersonal skills but relate best to practical information that can be applied immediately to school, job, or team settings. Providing tips and techniques as well as conceptual grounding based on academic research motivates the reader to learn a particular skill. Some popular interpersonal skills texts provide substantial theoretical and conceptual grounding of each skill area covered and are written primarily for a graduate audience rather than for undergraduates or working managers. In each chapter, we strike a balance by providing both sufficient conceptual material and applied material appropriate for use in real-life personal, academic, and professional situations, using conversational, user-friendly language.

## Coverage of Different Topics or More Thorough Coverage of Existing Topics

We have included a number of topics that are covered minimally, if at all, by other textbooks. Reviewers who have read our manuscript report that our treatment of topics such as self-disclosure and trust, aligning goals with personal values, stress and time management, conveying verbal messages, dealing with anger, listening as a skill in itself, diversity, nonverbal communication, ethical decision making, and negotiation are more thorough than what exists now. Other topics such as project management, facilitation, and problem solving are new and not addressed substantively in other books. Although some of these topics may deal with more advanced interpersonal skills, these chapters can be important for individuals who gain greater experience in their professional lives as well as impactful for graduate level students.

## Focus on Experiential Learning

In addition to the latest thinking about each of the topics covered, we provide different types of exercises at the end of each chapter that have been tested in the workplace or classroom and evaluated positively by both undergraduate and graduate students as well as working managers. The variety of exercises accomplishes several objectives. First, the instructor can accommodate multiple learning styles by fashioning a subset of exercises appropriate for a particular audience. “One size does not fit all.” Second, the combination of experiential and reflective exercises helps give students concrete experience, feedback, and an opportunity to reflect on ways to improve their current skill level. These activities help you create an experiential learning environment that encourages learning through doing. Our experiential focus will allow you to further engage younger learners who tend to prefer and respond more positively to active learning. Finally, in an age when virtual and distance education are increasingly popular, the numerous observational and reflective exercises can facilitate learning even in settings that feature virtual interaction in addition to, or in place of, face-to-face interaction.

## Why Focus on Interpersonal Skills?

The need to focus on improving interpersonal skills is recognized by more than business school faculty, deans, and executive advisory groups. In a recent survey by the TRACOM Group, more than 82 percent of managers identified communication or interpersonal skills training as important for leadership development, and 55 percent of staff members said bosses needed to improve these skills.<sup>1</sup> The “top 10 skills for the workplace 2020” from the World Economic Forum future job skills report were all intrapersonal or interpersonal skills: #1 complex problem solving, #3 creativity, #4 people management, #5 collaboration, #6 emotional intelligence, #7 judgment and decision making, #9 negotiation, and #10 cognitive flexibility<sup>2</sup>, which are all covered in this text. Studies also have shown that interpersonal or “soft skills” are extremely important for entry-level success, and the lack of interpersonal skills may be the major reason highly qualified professionals are not promoted.<sup>3</sup> The rise of teamwork in contemporary organizations has increased the need for every employee to work effectively with and through others. Individuals on work teams need to be able to communicate and collaborate effectively with others whose personalities, approaches, and work styles may differ greatly. In addition, as power to make decisions and implement solutions is transferred down the condensed hierarchy to nonsupervisory employees, the ability to marshal needed resources in the absence of power or authority makes interpersonal and managerial skills more critical than ever. Even those in leadership positions need to be skilled on the softer side of management along with having the right knowledge and experience. The Bloomberg Job Skills Report (2016) showed qualitative skills such as communication, creativity, and leadership dramatically outshine quantitative skills as the most desired by MBA recruiters but sadly were the least commonly available.<sup>4</sup>

Organizations are looking for employees with outstanding interpersonal skills to help them remain flexible and viable in today’s competitive workforce. Organizations are profoundly affected by interpersonal interactions within and between employees, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders. The more effective the relationships and interpersonal communications are, the more productive for the organization and the individuals.<sup>5</sup>

According to Harvard professor Robert Katz, three types of managerial skills are necessary: conceptual, technical, and interpersonal. As one moves through the managerial layers, the need for technological and conceptual skills changes, whereas the need for interpersonal skills remains proportionate for all managerial levels: lower, middle, and top.<sup>6</sup> Improving interpersonal skills

goes beyond the classroom and the boardroom; the lessons learned can have broad applications in helping individuals to better deal with problems and conflicts with family and friends.<sup>7</sup> Interpersonal skills help individuals initiate, build, and maintain relationships—in both personal and professional life.

*“For things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.”*

Aristotle

## A Pedagogical Approach That Works

In today’s service-oriented, knowledge- and information-focused, global marketplace, interpersonal skills are essential. However, these skills seldom occur naturally; for most of us they must and can be learned.<sup>8</sup> If these skills are neither learned nor practiced, the good news is that it is never too late to start. Recognizing the need for these skills and acquiring and enhancing them can help workers be continuous learners and remain marketable.<sup>9</sup>

We have designed the text and the supplementary materials to aid students and practicing managers in assessing their level of effectiveness and enhancing their capability in each of 19 skill areas. Each chapter begins with a set of questions that relate to the learning objectives of the chapter. Next, we include a case study that helps the reader understand how the skill (or lack thereof) applies in real-world situations. Then, we lay out the background about the skill—what it is and why it’s important. We offer strategies and techniques for learning and using the skill. Key terms are listed at the end of each chapter and appears bold in the text so students can check their understanding of the terms or phrases. The chapters are written in an easy-to-read style with numerous practical examples in both professional and personal settings. After the chapter summary and list of key terms and concepts, the reader can test his or her understanding of the written material and ability to apply the skills through the many exercises in each chapter. Some exercises are reflective, while others are experiential. Some exercises are designed to be performed in a class environment, while others can be performed outside the classroom. Some exercises allow for feedback from others while some activities encourage self-feedback. Many of the assignments can be used for creating writing assignments, either by reflection on the results of the activity or as a starting point for additional research.

## How the Book Is Organized

The book is organized in a practical, experiential learning format that facilitates learning.<sup>10</sup> Each of the 19 chapters can be used as a stand-alone, modular chapter independent of the rest of the book or used in conjunction with other chapters. The chapters are grouped into four units: understanding self (intrapersonal skills), working effectively with others (interpersonal skills), working in teams, and leading individuals and groups.

In the first unit, intrapersonal skills, we begin the process of looking within ourselves to analyze our strengths and weaknesses and gain a better understanding of our personal perceptions, views, beliefs, and work style. Unit I topics include self-awareness, self-disclosure and trust, personal values, goal setting, and ethics, as well as self-management. In the second unit we move to interpersonal skills, or interacting with others, through multiple forms of communication, listening, persuading, and working with diverse others. The third unit focuses on more advanced interpersonal skills for working with teams and groups such as building teams, running meetings, facilitation, and decision making and creative problem solving. In the final unit, we focus on leading groups or individuals through the use of power and politicking, networking, mentoring, coaching, empowerment, and managing projects.

In each chapter, we discuss how a skill or concept can be incorporated into one’s self-development, how a skill or concept is used in interactions with others, especially in team settings, and how the skill or concept is applied in the context of managerial roles in organizations.

## Connect Instructor Resources

Teaching interpersonal skills using an experiential, learner-centered approach differs greatly from those classes in which a more controlled, lecture-oriented approach may be appropriate. In order to help instructors transition from professor to facilitator—“sage on the stage” to “guide on the side”—we took pains to carefully construct a comprehensive Instructor’s Manual and supporting materials that support this goal.

Instructors will have access to the Instructor’s Manual, which contains sample syllabi and assignments, chapter-by-chapter explanatory notes, teaching plans, ideas for implementing the material in the classroom, ways to motivate the discussion on a topic, detailed instructions for using the activities and exercises, discussion questions, additional resources, and sample test questions. PowerPoint slides and a test bank are also available.

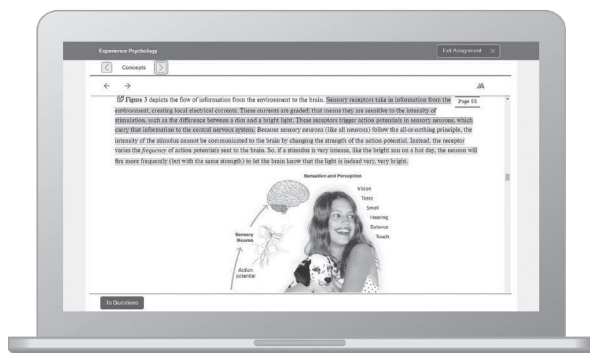


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- Jordan Cunningham,  
Eastern Washington University



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## What's New in the Seventh Edition?

Thanks to our students, faculty colleagues, and reviewers, we continue to search for new means to present the material necessary for assessing, learning, and improving interpersonal skills. The emphasis in this edition focuses on making the text more current and enhancing its pedagogic effectiveness for students and instructors. We do this by updating the content as well as enhancing the pedagogical process.

## Organization of Material

In this edition, we've added material from the popular press and current research, along with a diverse range of examples of organizations and current events, to enhance conceptual depth and breadth of applicability for skill areas presented in the chapters. Despite these enhancements, the overall map of the book that specifies both the journey and the major stops along the way, including intrapersonal effectiveness (understanding yourself), interpersonal effectiveness (understanding others), understanding and working in teams, and leading individuals and groups, remains intact.

It is always a challenge to determine the exact order for delivering each skill or combination of skills (e.g., **Chapter 16's** networking and mentoring); to address this challenge, we have included more examples that illustrate how these skills are interrelated without reordering the chapters. For instance, effectively coaching others or providing feedback, as discussed in **Chapter 17**, requires not only well-honed communication skills (**Chapter 7**) but also listening skills (**Chapter 6**) and goal-setting skills (**Chapter 3**) as vital components for success. Dealing with challenging behavior on teams (**Chapter 10**) is also referenced in **Chapters 11** (conflict), **12** (meetings), and **13** (facilitation). In the chapter on project management (**Chapter 19**), concepts from nearly every chapter are referenced to reinforce how all of the skill sets are necessary for becoming an overall effective manager of people and projects. References to other chapters with complementary skills have been noted throughout the text to allow the reader ease in referencing the necessary skill areas.

## Updates

Updating the material within the chapters was a key focus of this edition. While “landmark” research has been retained, we have incorporated new academic and commercial print and online sources to reflect current trends and research on the topics. Several opening scenarios and activities were enhanced to reflect greater diversity, stimulate reader interest, and provide clearer applications of how each interpersonal skill impacts business situations. We continue to strongly emphasize the importance and challenge of effective interpersonal skills in a global context. The ever-increasing impact of technology on our lives and interpersonal connections is addressed by including more discussion and exercises that feature virtual communication (e.g., in teams, negotiations), social networking, and e-mentoring. Changes were made to address current implications of how social media, generational differences, and globalization impact our understanding and application of interpersonal skills.

Graphics were added or changed as space permitted to provide visual reinforcement of the content. New shaded boxes were added to illustrate the skill sets in action, and cartoons were included for visual interest and concept illustration.

## Topic Expansion

Based on reviewer feedback and our own self-reflection, experience, and research, we've provided clearer explanations, more tips and techniques, and more visuals or examples to enhance several topics. For instance, we have changed the examples throughout to reflect greater diversity. The content is inclusive—appropriate for people of different age groups, ethnicities, experience bases, and backgrounds. We have incorporated material about social media, changing demographics, and generational differences.

We have added assessments that are easily accessible online and free and content on unconscious bias to **Chapter 1**. We have added material on safeguarding your online presence and on rebuilding trust in **Chapter 2**. **Chapter 3** includes new content on personal mission statements. **Chapter 4** contains added content on emotional intelligence and stress management, including mental health and anxiety reduction. In **Chapter 5**, we updated the employment market demographics statistics and citations, updated the content on generational differences, and added new content on working with multiple generations in the workplace simultaneously. New content about dealing with anger and emotion appears in **Chapter 6**. **Chapter 7** was enhanced with updated content on generational differences (tying in to the content in **Chapter 5**) and new content on the importance of “tone” in communications.

We've added the latest research on persuasion and exercises that incorporate video and observation to improve skill building in **Chapter 8**. We continue to update our exploration of virtual communication's impact on negotiation, teams, meetings, facilitation, and mentoring (**Chapters 9, 10, 12, 13, and 16**) and included new exercises to help build skills in dealing with these challenges. In addition to new material on addressing challenges particular to women negotiators and the importance of engag-

ing in “everyday negotiations,” we’ve enhanced **Chapter 9** with information to help when mediating as a third party, negotiating virtually, and addressing emotions and defensiveness. We’ve expanded the material in **Chapter 10** to cover best practices for working in virtual teams. We’ve added new material in **Chapter 11** that covers difficult conversations and ways to prevent and address workplace incivility—a growing and costly phenomenon. We’ve included updates on meetings in **Chapter 12**, in terms of technology (apps that help) and use (“workout” meetings for implementing rapid changes). **Chapter 13** now includes content on co-facilitation: how-to, benefits, and challenges. **Chapter 14** now has enhanced information and visuals for using decision making tools and includes explanations of “design thinking” and the application of creativity and innovation for social issues. Detailed steps for taking positive steps for politicking in organizations has been highlighted in **Chapter 15**. **Chapter 16** has been revised to reflect the latest research and practice in mentoring (in particular, virtual mentoring), including advice on how to get a mentor. **Chapter 17** was enhanced with the latest research on coaching and feedback to provide solid techniques and practices with integrated examples while **Chapter 18** highlights tactics by a diversity of leaders in empowering and leading others. **Chapter 19** now includes strong examples of project management in action along with updated links for electronic versions of project management tools. Overall, chapters have been updated with the latest research and business examples, with the addition of new exercises or discussion questions; all but a few chapters contain at least one new exercise and many more of the existing exercises were revised and called out in the text. Expansion of ideas for changing many of the activities are also provided in the Instructor’s Manual.

The application of concepts through experiential activities has been and continues to be a necessary strength of our approach, and we continuously search for and create exercises that facilitate skill acquisition. We believe the additions and changes to the seventh edition make the text more current, informative, practical, and immediately accessible and applicable. We are excited about these improvements and hope you find them as valuable as we believe they are.

## Acknowledgments

As is true of any substantive effort such as writing a book, there are many people to thank—more than can be listed here individually. Many thanks to all our teachers, colleagues, friends, and family members, from whom we learned what interpersonal skills are (and aren’t!). Special note needs to be made of several individuals and groups. Among them are our editors and production staff at McGraw-Hill—Michael Ablasmeir, Laura Hurst Spell, Melissa Leick, Sarah Blasco, Traci Vaske—and our colleagues at our respective schools and professional associations for their support and ideas. Special mention needs to be made of our reviewers, who gave us substantive, honest feedback that strengthened the final product. They include:

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# Introduction

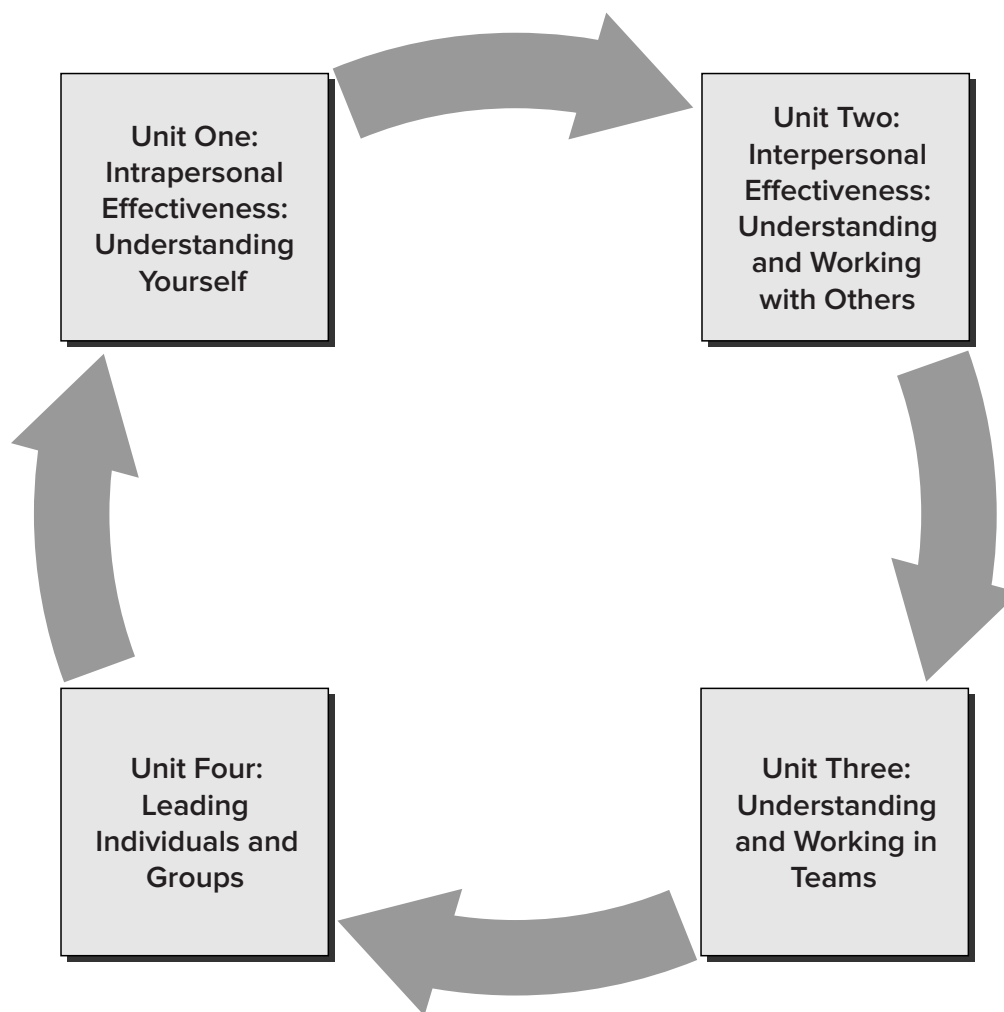
Every journey needs a map . . .

Imagine that you are finally able to take a much-needed vacation. If you're like most people, you will take time to plan your trip—the route you'll take, the places you'll stay, the activities you'll experience. You want to get the most out of this opportunity to relax, refresh, and renew.

What if the journey you were about to take were different? Longer? More meaningful? With more impact? Such is the journey to personal development: an exciting journey with a winding path toward an evolving destination and wonderful sightseeing opportunities. Some of the stops might be short visits, while others are like family and good friends who always leave the light on.

As with any planning for a journey, we first need to take time to consider where we've been and where we want to go. Then we envision all the wonderful places we might want to visit, honing in on a place that would bring us the most happiness. Finally, we'd have to create a plan and devise a route for how we would get there. We can take the scenic route, stopping at many points along the way. We could take a train and observe the passing sights or take a plane and go directly to our destination. Before we leave, we will also need to select from numerous lodging options and make reservations.

This journey of interpersonal skills is no different. In **Unit 1**, we offer an opportunity for you to assess what (skills, values, traits) you have. By taking inventory, we are better equipped to select where we want to be (clarifying target areas for improving personal and professional effectiveness). The different stops along the way—**Units 2, 3, and 4**—offer an assortment of options that, individually and collectively, promise to provide an interesting and enlightening journey on your way to personal and professional success.



## UNIT 1

### INTRAPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS: UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF

1. Journey into Self-Awareness
2. Self-Disclosure and Trust
3. Establishing Goals Consistent with Your Values and Ethics
4. Self-Management

## UNIT 2

### INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS: UNDERSTANDING AND WORKING WITH OTHERS

5. Understanding and Working with Diverse Others
6. Listening and Nonverbal Communication
7. Communicating Effectively
8. Persuading Individuals and Audiences

## UNIT 3

### UNDERSTANDING AND WORKING IN TEAMS

9. Negotiation
10. Building Teams and Work Groups
11. Managing Interpersonal and Organizational Conflict
12. Achieving Business Results through Effective Meetings
13. Facilitating Team Success
14. Making Decisions and Solving Problems Creatively

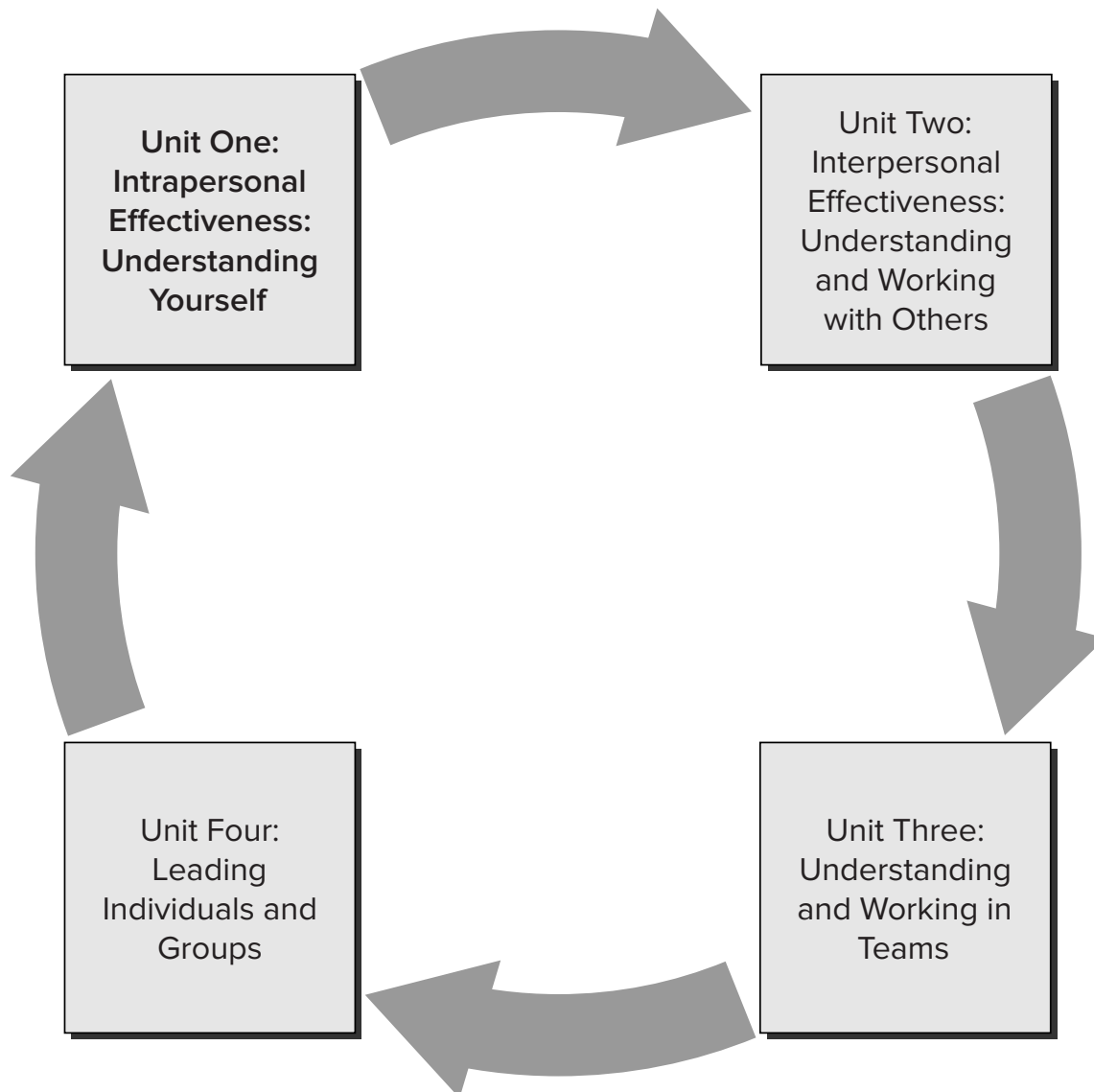
## UNIT 4

### LEADING INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS

15. Effective and Ethical Use of Power and Influence
16. Networking and Mentoring
17. Coaching and Providing Feedback for Improved Performance
18. Leading and Empowering Self and Others
19. Project Management

## Unit 1

The first leg of your journey toward interpersonal skill development begins with an opportunity to take inventory of your strengths and your development goals. This first unit is devoted to intrapersonal effectiveness—**understanding yourself** (and your goals, strengths, weaknesses, style, biases) and **improving self-management** skills, such as emotional intelligence, time management, and stress management. As you'll discover, "knowing yourself" may not be as easy as it sounds. We give you the tools to facilitate this process. Each of the four chapters in this unit helps you increase the odds of achieving intrapersonal effectiveness, and ultimately, personal and professional success and satisfaction. This first leg provides a solid start to your journey, as well as a strong foundation on which to build interpersonal, team-based, and leadership skills in the units that follow.



## 1

# Journey into Self-Awareness

## Learning Points

How do I:

- Figure out my strengths and understand how they might guide me in personal and professional choices?
- Know what motivates me in order to reach my potential?
- Assess my limitations and develop a plan for improving in these areas?
- Gain understanding and insight into my personality, attitudes, and behaviors?
- Identify the biases I have that affect my understanding and appreciation of others?

*Jacob Morgan, age 22, was excited about his first job out of college. He had worked summer jobs and one internship, but never in an environment as professional as the bank for which he'd work upon graduation. After taking some time off in the summer, he began work in August. Eager to show he was worthy of having been hired, he worked hard the first six months on the job. He enjoyed his co-workers, got along well with his manager, and was even involved in a technology project through which he was able to meet people from other departments of the bank.*

*The project objective was to develop a new system to handle customers. The present system barely met the needs of the bank's customers and was inefficient and costly to run. Over a period of several weeks, Jacob and his project team members worked diligently to study the problem and develop a solution.*

*The team consisted of Jacob plus five co-workers: two were about his age and the other three were considerably older. Four of the five were college educated, and all but one team member had greater tenure than he had. Of the six-person team, three were Caucasian, two were African American, and one was Asian American. The team did not have an official leader. Things ran smoothly for several weeks, until the time came for decisions to be made. As soon as a deadline was imposed on the group, Jacob became aware of some significant personality differences within the project team. Two members who had always arrived late to meetings were procrastinating on their assignments for the project. Two others who had attended the meetings began to spend more time socializing than working. One person who had been reluctant to state her opinion about the data that had been collected now said she thought the group needed more time before it would be ready to make a decision. Jacob had been very task oriented all along and was eager to finish the project and move on to other projects within the bank. He was very frustrated with the lack of progress being made by the group and was concerned about being part of a team that wasn't going to meet its assigned deadline. Yet he was reluctant to speak up. He felt he was too young and hadn't been at the bank long enough to have credibility with his teammates and take charge of the project. He didn't think he could approach his boss about the situation. He was perplexed about why the group was experiencing so many problems. Jacob thought to himself, "Why can't they get along? Why can't everyone on the team be more like me? I work hard and have pride in how this project is going to turn out. Why don't the others?" He began to wonder if this was the right place for him.*

1. Why is Jacob upset?
2. In what ways are the work styles of Jacob's teammates different from his? What causes those differences?
3. Can these differences be resolved? Why or why not?
4. How would you handle the situation if you were Jacob?

*"Know thyself."*

Socrates

The charge to "know thyself" has commonly been attributed to the ancient philosopher Socrates as well as to Plato, Pythagoras, and Thales. As early as 42 BC, Pubilius Syrus proposed: "It matters not what you are thought to be, but what you are."<sup>1</sup> Understanding yourself—your internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions—gives you the chance to understand your strengths and shortcomings. This is key not only to your ability to succeed, but also to your ability to work effectively with others. The best managers are keenly aware of their strengths—and their weaknesses.<sup>2</sup>

Good managers are able to capitalize on their strengths and either improve their limitations or work with others whose qualities complement theirs. They are able to understand others—their motivation, needs, style, capabilities, and limitations—and use this information to motivate and get results from them. They also keep current and regularly engage in self-assessment exercises and experiences that allow them to learn about and improve themselves continually. This chapter describes self-awareness: what it is, why it's important, and how to improve your level of self-awareness. It also addresses how strong self-knowledge can enhance your ability to manage and work with others and provides a number of exercises that enable you to assess yourself and develop improvement plans.

## What Is Self-Awareness?

**Self-awareness** is "the capacity for introspection and the ability to reconcile oneself as an individual separate from the environment and other individuals."<sup>3</sup> It is knowing your motivations, preferences, and personality and understanding how these factors influence your judgment, decisions, and interactions with other people. Internal feelings and thoughts, interests, strengths and limitations, culture, your fit within an organization, values, skills, goals, abilities, leadership orientation, career interests, and preferred communication style are just a few of the many elements of self-awareness.

Through self-awareness, you develop the ability to know how you are feeling and why, and the impact your feelings have on your behavior. It also involves a capacity to monitor and control biases that potentially affect your decision making. Self-awareness requires a strong commitment to study and evaluate your behaviors and characteristics and make plans for modification as necessary.<sup>4</sup>

## Why Is Self-Awareness Important?

Self-awareness is the starting point for effectiveness at work. The astute author and statesman Machiavelli wrote, "To lead or attempt to lead without first having a knowledge of self is foolhardy and sure to bring disaster and defeat." Or as a more contemporary blogger recently wrote: "[F]ew skills are as critical for a leader as that of accurate self-knowledge . . . all of us have a view of ourselves but that view is not always accurate. When it is not accurate we often get in the way of ourselves."<sup>5</sup> Self-awareness can help you:

- Understand yourself in relation to others.
- Develop and implement a sound self-improvement program.
- Set meaningful life and career goals.
- Develop relationships with others.
- Understand the value of diversity.
- Manage others effectively.
- Increase productivity.
- Increase your ability to contribute to organizations, your peers, employers, community, and family.

Knowing what you are good at and what you enjoy doing can help you to select a career or job that is professionally, financially, and personally satisfying. By knowing yourself—your strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes—you'll know where you "belong."<sup>6</sup>

Self-awareness is important for managers and organizations. Managers who have heightened self-awareness are superior performers. Awareness of self often leads to a greater understanding of others. Managers who can relate to or empathize with co-workers are more trusted and are perceived as being more competent.<sup>7</sup> Because self-aware managers are in tune with the concerns of

others, they are also able to reduce the potential for conflict and are more likely to be open to feedback. Self-aware managers who listen to feedback and make positive modifications to personal behavior are able to create trusting and productive work environments. Working effectively with others will therefore increase managerial and organizational effectiveness.

Self-awareness is key for global leaders. Understanding cross-cultural nuances and differing values, work ethics, and motivations of individuals in countries other than your home country is essential for anyone working in business today. All business is global; enhanced self-awareness gives you an understanding of your abilities and also of how to interact and work effectively with others. In a study of global leadership competencies, Jokinen identified three areas of global leadership competence that must be addressed, and self-awareness is at the top of the list, along with inquisitiveness and personal transformation. The author also stresses the importance of continuous learning, which is key to ongoing self-awareness and change.<sup>8</sup>

In assessing your own levels of self-awareness, be aware that cultural differences may play a part in your own awareness and that of others with whom you interact. While we don't wish to "label" people or groups, some cultures are viewed as more "**individualistic**," meaning that people define themselves independent of group affiliation, and some as more "**collectivist**," meaning that people define themselves in relation to what is acceptable within their group. Typically Westerners are individualists and people from Asian countries are collectivist. In one study it was shown that individualists and collectivists use different strategies to increase self-awareness. Individualists use internal information such as personal emotions when observing themselves, and collectivists assess themselves in relation to group harmony and in relation to group-approved norms.<sup>9</sup> Which are you? What individual and group norms affect your level of self-awareness?

Self-awareness is crucial to understand you and the organization where you are working. Each of us can be thought of as an instrument for assessment and change. By asking ourselves a series of questions, we can diagnose our situation and develop some solutions to problems we or our organizations are experiencing. Doing this requires strong self-awareness of our emotional reactions, initial perceptions, biases, and judgments—and a willingness to learn and change continuously. All of these will be considered in this and subsequent chapters.

## Lack of Self-Awareness

*"The greatest of faults, I should say, is to be conscious of none."*

Thomas Carlyle—Scottish author, essayist, and historian (1795–1881)

Self-awareness enables you to make good decisions: A realistic appraisal of your own and others' needs, objectives, resources, and capabilities can lead to more accurate judgments and more positive outcomes. Lack of self-awareness can lead to poor decisions and to an unrealistic notion of one's competencies. Self-awareness allows you to understand your strengths and core competencies—those core elements that contribute to your success. Lack of self-awareness can result in the opposite—incompetence, because the individual does not realize the gap between his or her perception and the reality of the strengths and competencies in question. Lack of self-awareness has also proven to be correlated with career derailment. Those who lack self-awareness are less able to see themselves accurately and are therefore less able to "mid-course correct" and make modifications necessary for change and improvement.<sup>10</sup>

*"There are three things extremely hard: steel, a diamond, and to know one's self."*

Benjamin Franklin—American diplomat, scientist, inventor, and writer (1706–1790)

## Strategies for Gaining Self-Awareness

The first step to becoming self-aware is to recognize your weaknesses, strengths, biases, attitudes, values, and perceptions. There are many ways to enhance self-awareness. Some of these are taking an online assessment, journaling (see **Exercise 1-A**), watching certain movies and TV shows to identify people to whom you relate, and seeking feedback from trusted role models and mentors throughout your career. Analyzing your own experiences, looking at yourself through the eyes of others, self-disclosing, and acquiring diverse experiences can also increase your self-awareness and improve the way you interact with and come across to others.

## Sample Online Self-Assessment Resources

- **Big Five Personality Test:** Identify learning and work preferences. See [openpsychometrics.org/tests/IPIP-BFFM](https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/IPIP-BFFM).
- **CareerLeader:** Identify career paths and work cultures that suit your interests, skills, and motivators. See [www.careerleader.com](http://www.careerleader.com).
- **DiSC:** Learn how to work with others, build teams, and improve productivity. See [www.thediscpersonalitytest.com](http://www.thediscpersonalitytest.com).
- **Keirsey Temperament Sorter:** Learn how people communicate. See [www.keirsey.com](http://www.keirsey.com).
- **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator:** Basic preferences based on your personality and personal work style. See [www.mbtionline.com](http://www.mbtionline.com).

## Self-Analysis

**Self-analysis** requires you to step back and observe (as objectively as possible) the factors that influence your behaviors, attitudes, thoughts, or interactions. Self-analysis is not always easy, yet it is necessary for you to increase your effectiveness personally and professionally.

Self-analysis can begin with reflection and exploring your thoughts and feelings. This helps you to obtain new perspectives based on new insights. You can become more effective by implementing new behavioral and cognitive changes in future situations. For instance, Jacob, from the chapter's opening scenario, has an opportunity to gain self-awareness from his dysfunctional team experience. Through reflection, he could see that his current behavior of remaining silent has not aided the team in its process. Gaining awareness of the impact of his action, or lack of action, could lead to a new perspective regarding teaming and his part in the process and to positive behaviors and attitudes in his current and future team projects. This learning will not only help Jacob in his professional life, but will enhance overall team and organizational effectiveness.

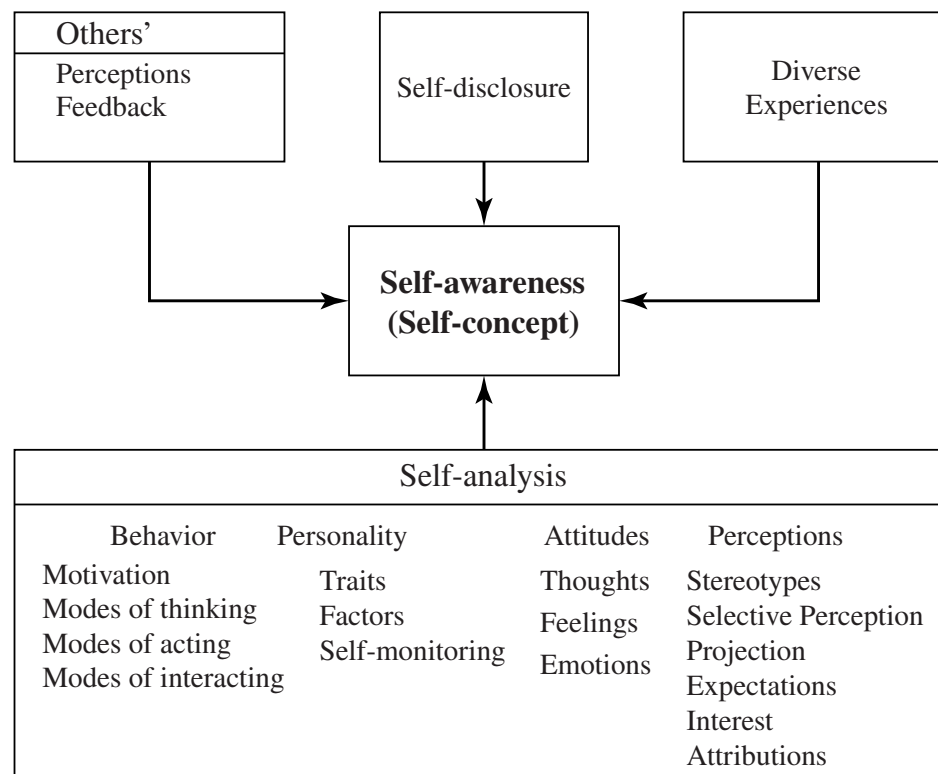
One means to gain insight is through examining your behavior, personality, attitudes, and perceptions. (See **Exercise 1-A**.)

## Behavior

**Behavior** is the way in which we conduct ourselves—the way in which we act. Patterns of behavior develop through reactions to events and actions over a period of time (see **Figure 1-1**). Behavior is influenced by motivation, thinking process, courses of action, and interaction patterns.<sup>11</sup>

1. **Motivation**—the drive to pursue one action over another. What underlying factors move you to make a particular decision or choice? For example, what drives you to do a good job? The answer might be a competitive nature, strong achievement orientation, or a difficult childhood experience. Being aware of your core drivers, those things that motivate you—positively and negatively—can help you understand the roots of your behavior and make adjustments as necessary to modify your behavior.
2. **Modes of thinking**—the way you process the various inputs your brain receives. How do you analyze information and make judgments about how to use and apply that information? For example, do you process information quietly by reflecting on your own, or do you process information aloud by talking with others? Being aware of how you take in and make sense of information can help you understand how you make judgments and decisions that lead to choosing one behavior or course of action over another.
3. **Modes of acting**—the course of action you apply in a given situation. What approach do you use in response to stimuli, events, and people? For example, when someone does something that offends you, do you react in anger? Or do you react quietly, assessing your options before acting? Being aware of how you express your reaction to things that happen can help you understand the alternatives available when certain events arise.
4. **Modes of interacting**—the way in which you communicate ideas, opinions, and feelings with others. How do you typically share your thoughts with others? For example, are you comfortable in large groups of people? In team situations? Or do you prefer to work on your own? Being aware of how you work with others can help you understand how your preferred style meshes with others.

FIGURE 1–1 Means for Obtaining Self-Awareness



## Personality

**Personality** describes the relatively stable set of characteristics, tendencies, and temperaments that have been formed by heredity and by social, cultural, and environmental factors.<sup>12</sup> These traits determine how we interact with and react to various people and situations. Some aspects of our personality are believed to be a result of nature—those traits with which we are born and that we possess through heredity. Other characteristics of our personality are thought to be a result of our environment—those factors that we acquire through exposure to people and events in our lives.

Personality traits are enduring characteristics that describe your attitude and behavior. Examples are agreeableness, aggression, dominance, and shyness. Most of these traits have been found to be quite stable over time.<sup>13</sup> This means that if you are cold and uncaring in one situation, you are likely to behave similarly in other situations. The Big Five model<sup>14</sup> is a powerful assessment that organizes numerous concepts into a “short list” of just five factors that are representative of the characteristics that can be linked with satisfaction and success. The Big Five model has five primary components (see **Exercise 1–B**): extroversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. These factors can be linked to job satisfaction, employee attitudes and behavior, stress, and job performance. While some personality characteristics are inherited, some factors can be modified through training, experience, and a conscious attempt to change.

1. **Extroversion**—assesses the degree to which you are social or antisocial, outgoing or shy, assertive or passive, active or inactive, and talkative or quiet. A person who rates high for the first traits in these pairs is extroverted, while someone who rates high for the second traits is introverted. Extroversion or introversion, in itself, is not necessarily bad, but extremes at both ends of the spectrum can be equally dysfunctional. A person who is too outgoing could be perceived as overbearing, and a person who is too reserved might be perceived as disinterested.
2. **Agreeableness**—measures the degree to which you are friendly or reserved, cooperative or guarded, flexible or inflexible, trusting or cautious, good-natured or moody, soft-hearted or tough, and tolerant or judgmental. Those scoring high on the first element of these paired traits are viewed as agreeable and easy to work with, while those rating low are viewed as more disagreeable and difficult to work with. Being too agreeable could cause a person to be too accommodating, however, and others may take advantage of this weakness.
3. **Emotional stability**—measures the degree to which you are consistent in how you react to certain events, weigh options before acting, and look at a situation objectively. Those who rate high on emotional stability are viewed as generally calm, stable, having a positive attitude, able to manage their anger, secure, happy, and objective. Those who rate lower are more likely to be anxious, depressed, angry, insecure, worried, and emotional.

4. **Conscientiousness**—represents the degree to which you are dependable, can be counted on, follow through on commitments, and keep promises. Those who rate high on conscientiousness are generally perceived to be careful, thorough, organized, persistent, achievement oriented, hardworking, and persevering. Those who score lower on this dimension are more likely to be viewed as inattentive to detail, uncaring, disrespectful, not interested or motivated, unorganized, apt to give up easily, and lazy.
5. **Openness to experience** considers whether you are interested in broadening your horizons or limiting them, learning new things or sticking with what you already know, meeting new people or associating with current friends and co-workers, going to new places or restricting yourself to known places. Individuals who score high on this factor tend to be highly intellectual, broad-minded, curious, imaginative, and cultured. Those who rate lower tend to be more narrow-minded, less interested in the outside world, and uncomfortable in unfamiliar surroundings and situations. Professionals who are open to experience are more willing to reflect on feedback for personal development.

## Your Personality

- What are the characteristics of your personality? How do you know this? (See **Exercise 1–B.**)
- Which aspects of your personality do you like, and which would you like to modify?
- While it's true that some of these factors are ingrained, few of these factors are fixed in stone. You can identify those qualities that are working well for you and worth keeping, as well as those qualities that aren't working well for you that you can change or abandon.

## Self-Monitoring

**Self-monitoring** is the ability to regulate your thinking before speaking or acting. This allows you to quickly assess the needs of others or of a social or business situation and adapt your behavior and interactions accordingly.<sup>15</sup> Monitoring your own personality can help you come to grips with both positive qualities and those you would like to change. By being aware of the role of self-monitoring, you can assess your own attitudes, diagnose which elements you are satisfied with, and identify and develop plans for addressing those aspects you want to change. When self-monitoring, set your standards in accordance with certain accepted norms. High self-monitors are very sensitive to external cues and constantly adapt (and often hide) their true selves to conform to a situation or set of expectations. Low self-monitors display their feelings, attitudes, and behaviors in every situation. In an organizational setting, it is probably best to avoid the extremes. You don't want to be a high self-monitor (solely concerned with what others think) or a low self-monitor (not at all interested in what others think). Always trying to please everyone or conforming to gain everyone's approval—while it might facilitate getting what you want in the short term—can be harmful to you in the long term. Conversely, never adjusting your behavior relative to the audience or situation can be self-defeating.

All of the personality dimensions can have a significant impact on job performance and interpersonal relationships. By understanding the meaning of these factors, you can pinpoint areas for personal and professional development and growth. Knowledge of your ratings on each of these dimensions can also help in selecting a career. Finding work that matches your personal preferences may require a fair amount of investigation; this investment in time and resources pays big dividends—success and happiness. For example, a person who is low on the extroversion and agreeableness factors would probably not be happy (or successful) as a traveling sales representative. The basic nature of the job requires an outgoing, friendly individual in order to contact and build a rapport with clients. A poor fit between one's personality and job can be a recipe for disaster.

## Attitudes

**Attitudes** are “settled ways of thinking about someone or something, typically reflected in a person's behavior.”<sup>16</sup> As human beings, we can choose how we think and feel about a situation or event. Imagine you are on an airplane that has been diverted to another airport due to bad weather. You can choose to become irritated and show your anger to the flight attendant, or you can be patient, acknowledge that nothing can be done to change the situation, and take out a good book to read while waiting for your flight to land. The emotions we choose to act on determine our attitude. This in turn is reflected in our behavior.

## Your Attitude

Attitude can vary from situation to situation. For example, you might have a positive outlook when with friends, feel negatively about your work, and have a neutral attitude toward your academic experience. Attitudes are derived from supervisors, parents, teachers, peers, society, and our own experiences. Attitudes are one of the less stable facets of our personality, which means they are easier to influence and change than our behaviors or values.<sup>17</sup> This is good news because with some effort you can almost always change the way you react to events and people and develop a positive outlook on life even when circumstances change.

Strong attitudes can impact your professional and personal relationships. As a student or manager, it is helpful to remember how much of a role your attitude can play in your success. Your demeanor, whether you are with others or grappling with an issue on your own, can make a significant difference in what behaviors you choose to exercise and in the outcomes of your efforts. Have you heard the saying, “She takes lemons and turns them into lemonade”? This is an example of the power of attitude. Your attitude can determine whether you think positively and take control of a situation or think negatively and feel helpless about your ability to change or respond to a situation. Attitude is important to being productive at work or in school.

Attitude can influence those around us. Being aware of your own attitude and making choices about which attitude to display to others is very important. Attitude can affect your job behavior as well as your interactions with others. Friends, significant others, family members, co-workers, and others are definitely influenced by your thoughts and feelings toward situations. As a manager, it is also important to recognize your employees are affected by the attitude you display toward them and toward the work that needs to get done. A manager’s attitude is a large factor in how people feel about their jobs. If a manager is upbeat most of the time and supportive of his or her colleagues, employees will generally respond well and work hard to produce the desired results. On the other hand, if a manager is pessimistic and belittling toward his or her employees, staff morale will suffer and, ultimately, so will the expected outcomes.

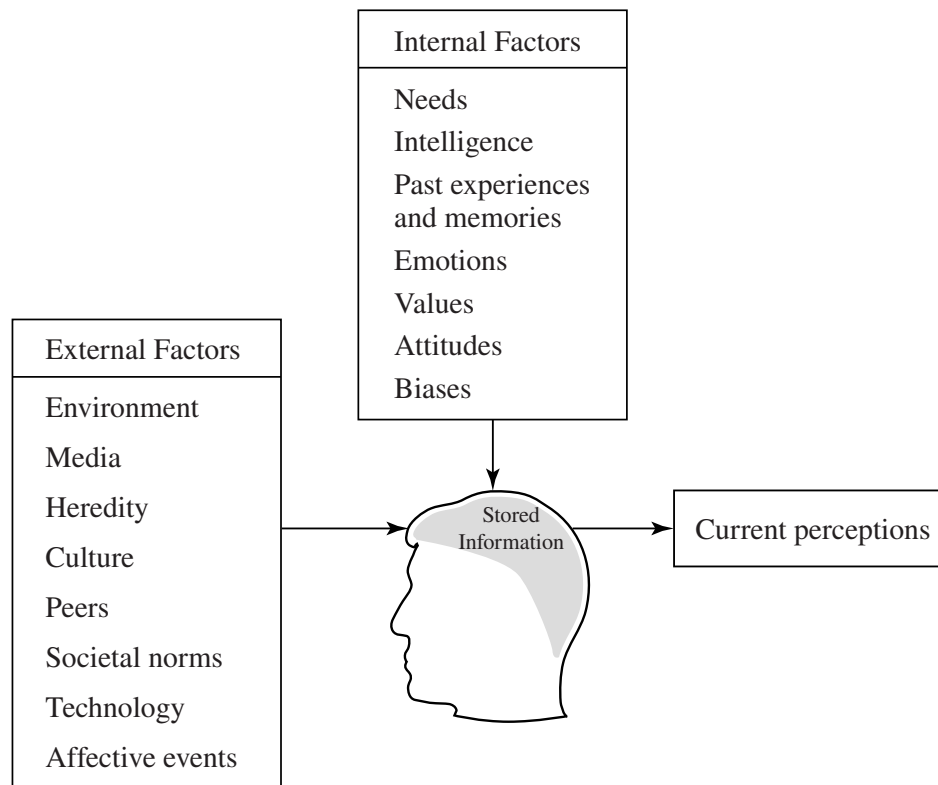
## Perceptions

**Perception** is the process by which you select, evaluate, and organize information and make sense of it.<sup>18</sup> When you encounter a person or situation, you use your senses to absorb various inputs. Next, your brain selects aspects from stored information in order to process and organize these inputs. Finally, your brain interprets and evaluates the person or situation. Perception is person-specific—no two people will take in, organize, and evaluate inputs the same way. Your perspective on a situation can be entirely different from the way another person looks at the exact same situation. Two friends walking by the window of a crowded restaurant spot a couple engaged in conversation. One friend, taking notice of their mannerisms and gestures, concludes that it “looks like they’re breaking off their relationship.” The other friend vehemently disagrees. “No, they’re probably discussing a plan to spend more time together.” Which friend is right?

Individual perception may not always be consistent with reality; it is only the perceiver’s interpretation of reality. For example, when you go to a movie with a group, your opinion and those of your friends might differ. You each perceived the same event through a different set of lenses. One might have seen the movie as an action film, another as a romance. There’s probably some element of truth in both perspectives. What’s reality for you is based on your interpretation of the event. Your reality can be shaped and impacted by learning about others’ perceptions of the same incident. For example, checking your perception with others and sharing yours with them might change your opinion of the movie or increase your understanding of it. At work, the best managers are those who augment their own perspective with the views of others. Your perceptions can—and should—change based on new inputs.

It is important to be in touch with your perceptions—what they are and how they’re being formed. Equally important is being aware of the perceptions of others. Others’ behavior toward you is heavily influenced by their understanding of the situation, and your behavior toward others is equally dependent on your assumptions about them and the situation. It is crucial to understand and disclose your own perspective as well as to solicit information from others about their understanding of the same situation.

Factors from a variety of sources may simultaneously impact your perception (see **Figure 1-2**). This makes it even more important to be fully aware of the factors that influence your perception. Our past experience, belief system, family background, and personal values heavily influence our perceptions of others. You can check to ensure that your own experience and perspective are not negatively distorting your perceptions of reality.

**FIGURE 1–2 Factors That Affect Perceptions**

As human beings, we tend to form perceptions based on our biases. If you are not aware of your biases and don't check your understanding with others, you may miss important information and situations by relying on distorted perceptions. Some of the more common filters that can influence your perceptions are stereotyping, selective perception, projection, expectations, and interest.

- **Stereotyping**—making assumptions about an individual or a group based on generalized judgments rather than on facts. Many who stereotype others do so on the basis of observable demographic characteristics, such as race or ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religion, and sexual orientation. For example, some companies are reluctant to hire older workers for certain job roles for fear that they lack the energy and stamina to perform at a desired level. Stereotyping is a convenient but faulty way to make assumptions about a person's behavior and abilities. Rather than relying on a stereotype that is probably largely false, it is best to check your own perceptions and come to an event or meet a new person with an open mind. This will allow you to form your own perspective rather than rely on biases that have been shaped by judging and attributing certain behaviors to all members of a group.
- **Selective perception**—interpreting information for meaning and accuracy, and discarding information that is threatening or not relevant. We are constantly bombarded with stimuli. This has always been true but even more so today, thanks to social media, online newspapers and news feeds, 24-hour cable news channels, mobile devices, instant access to Internet content, texting, and email. In an effort to reduce the breadth and impact of continuous stimuli, our brains attend to information according to our own experiences, interests, attitudes, and background. This means we are constantly "filtering"—absorbing and processing only those inputs we think we can handle, or want to handle, at any given time. For example, people tend to dislike thinking about their own mortality, so they avoid the subject of wills and funeral planning. A college student whose main concern is graduating is probably not likely to be thinking of retirement plans. A graduate student in finance may not pay attention to an excellent speaker who's in marketing. A manager with a project deadline is probably not going to read information for a meeting that's scheduled for next month.

Selective perception serves a useful purpose, but it hinders communication with others. Rather than automatically "tuning out" information with which you disagree, keep an open mind, being open to all new views about a situation before prematurely developing your own opinion. (See **Exercise 1–C** for more on selective perception.)

- **Projection**—attributing one's own attitudes, characteristics, or shortcomings to others. For example, someone who cheats and lies might make the assumption that everyone cheats and lies. This validates our own perceptions of the way things are, or at least the way we think things should be. However, projecting our beliefs onto others denies them the opportunity to

provide us with a unique and fresh perspective. Rather than transferring your own experience and feelings to another, it is best to consider each new situation and person in your life as unique, paying attention to *their* features and characteristics rather than yours.

- **Expectations**—forming an opinion about how we would like an event to unfold, a situation to develop, or a person to act, think, or feel. We tend to perceive, select, and interpret information according to how we expect it to appear. For example, when proofreading a paper or report you have written, you may pass over mistakes because you know what you intended to say, so you perceive it to be correct. By understanding what your expectations are and viewing a situation with a clean slate—minus preconceived notions about what to expect—you are better able to approach situations and people and form your own opinions based on actual experience rather than on assumptions.
- **Interest**—basing our activities and inputs on things that are likeable or appealing to us. We tend to focus our time and attention—consciously or subconsciously—on those things that are enjoyable and meaningful to us. For example, if we are in the market to buy a new home we will notice “For Sale” signs in front of houses that previously would have gone unnoticed. If you have an interest in people, you might focus on a career in teaching or counseling, while ignoring other subjects such as computer science. The tendency to be drawn to things that interest us can be positive, in that it helps conserve our energy for the things that matter to us. However, as you increase your own self-understanding, it is important to reach out to things that go beyond what interests you at the time. By doing this you can broaden yourself and your understanding of the things that are important and meaningful to others.

By understanding yourself, you can begin to change your perceptions that are often affected by the biases just described. Understand and confront your biases. By doing so, you will increase your level of self-understanding and will be more understanding of others and their perspectives. The workplace is increasingly global and diverse. Companies are now involved in developing new business models. You will be better equipped to formulate and embrace these new models by expanding both your self-awareness and other-awareness. This step will help you to be a better manager and person.

## Unconscious Bias

Universities and companies are beginning to recognize the prevalence of unconscious, or implicit, bias. This happens when our brains make instant assessments of individuals based on things such as their ethnicity, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, economic, or class status. Unconscious bias is a result of our upbringing and background. It is very common and affects most human beings. Examples include overlooking someone for a promotion based on their race, not giving more responsibility to a woman because she is pregnant, or demoting someone because he is “too old” for a new role. Unconscious bias can result in unintentional discrimination.

What can you do to determine the degree to which you have unconscious bias? You can set a personal goal to work on decreasing your unconscious bias. Be intentional about being open to new people and experiences. Participate in unconscious bias training that may exist at your school or place of employment. Participate in as many group collaborative projects with diverse people as possible. Put yourself in the other’s place when you watch a movie or TV show, attend a meeting, or go out to eat with colleagues. The more you can relate to others and understand the world from their perspective, the more likely you are to broaden your understanding of others and gain new insights that will help you when interacting and communicating with others.<sup>19</sup>

## Attribution Theory

A percentage of your perceptions are derived from what you attribute to the causes of behavior in yourself or others. **Attribution theory** demonstrates that individuals tend to decide that a behavior is caused by a particular characteristic or event.<sup>20</sup> We make these attributions or judgments about what caused the resulting behavior based on our personal observation or evaluation of the situation. For instance, after being fired from a position, you might blame the dismissal on an internal factor or personal characteristic such as being an incompetent worker. Or you might blame the dismissal on an external factor such as a declining economy. Understanding how and why you make these attributions is important because future decisions and behaviors are based more on your perception of why something happened rather than on the actual outcome.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, we tend to reinforce our beliefs about ourselves and others based on the perceptions we gain from these experiences.

It is also important to evaluate whether these judgments are attributed more to internal or external factors. Attributing outcomes to controllable factors tends to be a stronger indicator of future behavior than attributing them to uncontrollable factors.<sup>22</sup> For instance, if you attribute the loss of a job to internal or controllable factors, you might feel shame, which could have one of two effects: hampering attempts to get a new position or pushing you to become a more effective employee in the future. However,

if you blame the job loss on an external or uncontrollable factor, it may lead to anger. Perceptions determine behavior in future situations based on the amount of personal control you believe you have over the situation.

Behavior and perception have an impact on your attributions. **Self-serving bias** causes us to overestimate internal factors for successes and blame external factors for failures. This may cause you to evaluate incorrectly your personal strengths and weaknesses. Another bias is **fundamental attribution error**, which causes individuals to overestimate the impact of internal factors and underestimate the influence of external factors when evaluating the behavior of others. We are more likely to judge people who lose their temper as unable to control themselves than to blame the situation. It is important to evaluate both internal and external factors before jumping to conclusions.

## Increasing Your Self-Awareness

- Learn from your mistakes.
- Ask for feedback.
- Change your attitude.
- Be aware of your biases.
- Expand your interests and perspective.
- Increase your experience base.

## Others' Perceptions

Self-awareness is also gained through understanding how others view us and how we are shaped by others' opinions of us. Stephen Covey refers to this concept as the "**social mirror**,"<sup>23</sup> which has its roots in Cooley's and Mead's work related to the concept of the "looking-glass self."<sup>24</sup> Covey explains that we gain perceptions of ourselves as a result of what other people say about us or how they react to us. We adopt a view of ourselves based on others' views. How do others view us? How do we change our actions as a result of what we think others are thinking about us? These are the questions to ask to get a handle on how we are shaped by others' perceptions. By seeing ourselves through others' eyes, we can learn about our strengths and also about areas in which we can improve. (See **Exercise 1-D**.)

Learning to read accurately how others see us enhances our "self-maps," our images and judgments of ourselves. For example, you might say to yourself, "I'm not a creative person" or "I'm an athletic person" after hearing comments from others about your artistic or athletic ability. The social mirror is based on our memory of how others have reacted toward us or treated us. Through feedback from others we can gain more insight or perspective into aspects of ourselves and our behaviors. However, our perceptions may not be based accurately on this information. The social mirror can be wrong or only partially correct. For example, an overbearing parent might say something negative, such as "You'll never amount to anything." In this case, be very careful to first assess the statement—is it true? If the statement is not a reflection of reality, then work hard to dispel this image of you in your own mind, if not in the mind of the person who said it to you. Negative self-statements can be very damaging to one's self-esteem. The social mirror is designed to help you learn about yourself, but you shouldn't accept everything that others say to you as reality. (See **Exercise 1-D** for more on the social mirror.)

## Self-Disclosure

Another means of gaining self-awareness is through **self-disclosure**—sharing your thoughts, feelings, and ideas with others without self-deception, without distortion.<sup>25</sup> Talking with others allows us to share our feelings and responses. Self-disclosing is a key factor in improving our self-awareness; we must disclose information and interact with others to further clarify our perceptions.<sup>26</sup> Through verbalizing our perceptions, we verify our own beliefs, affirm our self-concept, and validate data received from an objective source. For example, if you've received a low grade on an exam, it's helpful to discuss this with others. They can listen to your concerns and give you feedback. They might empathize with the fact that you've received a low grade, then offer to problem-solve—for instance, identifying a test-taking strategy you can use in the future. They might also remind you that in general you do well in school. This helps you to maintain perspective even while going through a hard time about the exam. See more about self-disclosure in **Chapter 2**.

## Diverse Experiences

Another way of increasing self-awareness is through acquiring multiple experiences in diverse situations and with diverse others. For example, studying or working in a country other than your home country, working in a multifunctional position at your job, learning a new language, traveling, keeping up with international news outlets, reading books on new subjects, and acquiring broad work experience are ways to broaden our experience base. Even negative situations such as having to face a life-threatening illness, working with a difficult boss, going through your own or your parents' divorce, and overcoming a personal problem such as dyslexia can provide enormous learning and enhance your experience base.

As we acquire more experiences, we have both successes and failures. We can learn just as much if not more from failures. When things go wrong, assess what happened, take responsibility, and most importantly, determine how you can do better the next time. As we encounter new situations, we use skills and acquire new ones, meet people and develop friendships, see new places, and learn firsthand about things we might have only read about. Being open to new experiences broadens our horizons. It helps us to see ourselves in a new light while giving us new information about ourselves and our ability to interact with the world. This boosts our confidence level and encourages us to reach out to further our experiences even more. It makes us more open to new ideas and diverse people with varying ways of living, working, and thinking. Expanding our experience base puts us into situations that test our abilities, values, and goals. This greatly aids in increasing our level of self-awareness.

## Summary

Self-awareness is an essential skill for developing personally and professionally. If you have a high degree of self-awareness, you'll be able to capitalize on your strengths and develop plans for improving or compensating for your limitations. Part of being self-aware is being able to monitor and change your behavior. By concentrating on self-improvement, you demonstrate to others your willingness to learn and grow, increasing the likelihood of being able to develop close relationships and success in both your life and career.

## Key Terms and Concepts

Agreeableness

Attitudes

Attribution theory

Behavior

Collectivist

Conscientiousness

Emotional stability

Expectations

Extroversion

Fundamental attribution error

Individualism

Interest

Modes of acting

Modes of interacting

Modes of thinking

Motivation

Openness to experience

Perception

Personality

Projection

Selective perception

Self-analysis

Self-awareness

Self-disclosure

Self-monitoring

Self-serving bias

Social mirror

Stereotyping

Unconscious bias

## Discussion Questions

1. What can you do to increase your levels of self-awareness in the coming year?
2. You may have heard the term "personality clash" before. What does this mean and how can this be avoided?

3. How can you respond strategically to others whose styles are different from yours?
4. What effect do you think your country of origin has on your levels of self-awareness?
5. What effect do your current age and state in life have on your levels of self-awareness?
6. How can your self-awareness inform your next career and life decisions?

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## Exercise 1–A Journal Writing

A good way to become self-aware and improve our reaction to situations is to keep a journal.

Once a week go to a place where you won't be interrupted and reflect on the previous week. What interpersonal situations did you face and respond to appropriately? Which ones are you happy with? Why? In which situations did you not behave effectively? Which ones didn't accomplish the outcome you were seeking? Why?

Write about two to three situations weekly, sharing your feelings, analyzing the interactions, acknowledging what's working and list ways to improve future interactions. For each, describe which of your behaviors and attitudes were helpful, how your personality contributed to the situation, and how your perception of the situation affected the outcome.

## Exercise 1–B The Big Five Personality Test

### Introduction

This personality test will help you understand why you act the way you do and how your personality is structured. Please follow the instructions provided; scoring and results follow the test.

### Instructions

In the table, for each statement 1–50 mark (in the box on the left) how much you agree with it on the scale 1–5, where 1 = disagree, 2 = slightly disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = slightly agree, and 5 = agree.

### Test

Rating	I...	Rating	I...
	1. Am the life of the party.		26. Have little to say.
	2. Feel little concern for others.		27. Have a soft heart.
	3. Am always prepared.		28. Often forget to put things back in their proper place.
	4. Get stressed out easily.		29. Get upset easily.
	5. Have a rich vocabulary.		30. Do not have a good imagination.
	6. Don't talk a lot.		31. Talk to a lot of different people at parties.
	7. Am interested in people.		32. Am not really interested in others.
	8. Leave my belongings around.		33. Like order.
	9. Am relaxed most of the time.		34. Change my mood a lot.
	10. Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.		35. Am quick to understand things.

Rating	I...	Rating	I...
	11. Feel comfortable around people.		36. Don't like to draw attention to myself.
	12. Insult people.		37. Take time out for others.
	13. Pay attention to details.		38. Shirk my duties.
	14. Worry about things.		39. Have frequent mood swings.
	15. Have a vivid imagination.		40. Use difficult words.
	16. Keep in the background.		41. Don't mind being the center of attention.
	17. Sympathize with others' feelings.		42. Feel others' emotions.
	18. Make a mess of things.		43. Follow a schedule.
	19. Seldom feel blue.		44. Get irritated easily.
	20. Am not interested in abstract ideas.		45. Spend time reflecting on things.
	21. Start conversations.		46. Am quiet around strangers.
	22. Am not interested in other people's problems.		47. Make people feel at ease.
	23. Get chores done right away.		48. Am exacting in my work.
	24. Am easily disturbed.		49. Often feel blue.
	25. Have excellent ideas.		50. Am full of ideas.

$$E = 20 + (1) \underline{\quad} - (6) \underline{\quad} + (11) \underline{\quad} - (16) \underline{\quad} + (21) \underline{\quad} - (26) \underline{\quad} + (31) \underline{\quad} - (36) \underline{\quad} + (41) \underline{\quad} - (46) \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

$$A = 14 - (2) \underline{\quad} + (7) \underline{\quad} - (12) \underline{\quad} + (17) \underline{\quad} - (22) \underline{\quad} + (27) \underline{\quad} - (32) \underline{\quad} + (37) \underline{\quad} + (42) \underline{\quad} + (47) \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

$$C = 14 + (3) \underline{\quad} - (8) \underline{\quad} + (13) \underline{\quad} - (18) \underline{\quad} + (23) \underline{\quad} - (28) \underline{\quad} + (33) \underline{\quad} - (38) \underline{\quad} + (43) \underline{\quad} + (48) \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

$$N = 38 - (4) \underline{\quad} + (9) \underline{\quad} - (14) \underline{\quad} + (19) \underline{\quad} - (24) \underline{\quad} - (29) \underline{\quad} - (34) \underline{\quad} - (39) \underline{\quad} - (44) \underline{\quad} - (49) \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

$$O = 8 + (5) \underline{\quad} - (10) \underline{\quad} + (15) \underline{\quad} - (20) \underline{\quad} + (25) \underline{\quad} - (30) \underline{\quad} + (35) \underline{\quad} + (40) \underline{\quad} + (45) \underline{\quad} + (50) \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$$

### Scoring

The scores you calculate should be between 0 and 40. Following is a description of each trait.

**Extroversion (E)** is the personality trait of seeking fulfillment from sources outside the self or in the community. High scorers tend to be very social while low scorers prefer to work on their projects alone.

**Agreeableness (A)** is the personality trait of adjusting behavior to suit others. High scorers are typically polite and like people. Low scorers tend to "tell it like it is."

**Conscientiousness (C)** is the personality trait of being honest and hardworking. High scorers tend to follow rules and prefer clean homes. Low scorers may be messy and cheat others.

**Neuroticism (N)** is the personality trait of being emotional.

**Openness to Experience (O)** is the personality trait of seeking new experience and intellectual pursuits. High scorers may day-dream a lot. Low scorers may be very down to earth.

Source: From [personality-testing.info](http://personality-testing.info), [pip.ori.org](http://pip.ori.org), <http://personality-testing.info/printable/big-five-personality-test.pdf>.

# Exercise 1–C Selective Perception

How does selective perception affect the interpretation of what we see and hear?

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Your instructor will read two scenarios. Following the reading of each situation, write in the appropriate column what you see and hear from the description (what picture comes to mind?), what judgments you make or conclusions you draw about the situation, and what (if any) actions you would take.

Scenario One:

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Scenario Two:

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What I see/hear:	My judgment:	What action I would take:
1.		
2.		

## Questions

These can be considered individually and discussed in small groups.

1. Why do we interpret the same scenario differently from others?
2. What impact does this have on developing relationships?
3. What if in scenario one, the person you “met” was a woman? How would your interpretation of the situation change?
4. What if in scenario two, the person with the daughter was her mother instead of her father? Or perhaps the discussion was between a father and his son? How would your interpretation of these situations change?
5. Why is it important to know what our biases are?
6. Let’s say it’s three years in the future. You’ve been working for a *Fortune* 500 firm as a member of a product development team. The meeting is about to start when a man matching the description in scenario one walks in. What’s your judgment? Why?
7. As the meeting proceeds, he’s about to open his mouth. Before he speaks, do you assume that he is credible or not credible until proven otherwise?
8. How do our biases help/hinder us in the workplace?

# Exercise 1–D The Social Mirror

To recognize the potential inaccuracy or incompleteness of the social mirror, or others’ opinions about you as a person, take a moment to reflect on how the social mirror has affected you. Use the questions as a guide. Reflect back on all aspects of your life: personal (dealing with family and friends, roommates, neighbors, significant others), academic (teachers, coaches, classmates),

and professional (bosses, co-workers, subordinates, mentors) to examine what influences others have had on your self-image and other areas of importance to you (community, religion, sports, etc.).

1. What would others say about you that is generally positive?

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2. What “constructive suggestions” would others offer to help you improve or change?

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3. What do you most like about yourself?

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4. What do you most dislike in yourself and would like to change?

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5. What beliefs do you have about yourself that limit you?

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6. How might these beliefs have been created or influenced by your social mirror?

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7. Since it is possible—perhaps even likely—that these weaknesses or limitations are more imagined than real, what could you do to turn them into strengths?

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## Exercise 1–E Expanding Self-Awareness

1. Identify a behavior of yours that you would like to change. Practice a different form of that behavior for one week. For example, if you constantly interrupt others, try to go a week without interrupting anyone. Keep a record of every time you change this behavior. Reward yourself at the end of the week for being conscious of the need to change. Attempt a different behavior in week two, and so on.
2. Observe a person you admire at work or in school off and on for several days. How would you describe that person's attitude? What evidence do you have of this? What can you do to emulate his or her positive qualities?
3. Write on a sheet of paper adjectives that you wish could describe your personality. Identify some ways in which you could make changes to incorporate these qualities into your interactions with others.
4. Ask a few close friends for feedback about you as a person, your strong qualities, and areas you could change.
5. Reflect upon the last time you found yourself under a lot of pressure. How did you react? Respond? Behave? Develop a plan to help you think clearly in future situations to have a more controlled and less emotional response. For example, if you usually have a physical response when you get angry, think of an alternative means to handle your anger.

## Exercise 1–F Interpersonal Skills Checklist

Developing interpersonal skills is vitally important in today's workplace even if you are an individual contributor in the workplace. It is critical to communicate effectively with your boss, colleagues, the leadership team, and customers. However, most people do not communicate as effectively as they could. Rate each of the following 12 interpersonal skills using a scale of 1–5, where 1 means disagree and 5 is agree. Sum your score to see how your interpersonal skills add up. If your score is 60 or lower, develop an action plan to improve your weaker interpersonal skills, which will positively affect your leadership skills and effectiveness.

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	
1. Effective listening skills I always actively listen to both verbal and nonverbal communications of others.	1	2	3	4 5
2. Accepting responsibility I constantly take responsibility and am accountable for my decisions, actions, and behaviors.	1	2	3	4 5
3. Problem-solving ability I am competent helping others creatively solve tough problems in a calm and soothing manner.	1	2	3	4 5
4. Appropriate expression of feelings and opinions I always clearly articulate my feelings and opinions during meetings without becoming overly emotional.	1	2	3	4 5
5. Self-awareness I am continually aware of my feelings and emotions and take into account how they can affect my actions and behaviors.	1	2	3	4 5
6. Awareness of others I always appreciate others' experiences and contributions from diverse backgrounds as well as being sensitive to how my behaviors affect others.	1	2	3	4 5
7. Acknowledge others' achievements I continually compliment and praise others for their achievements and show appreciation for others' contributions.	1	2	3	4 5
8. Trust and integrity I always follow through on my commitments and demonstrate honesty and integrity in my actions.	1	2	3	4 5
9. Openness to feedback I continually solicit feedback from others and incorporate their suggestions to be more effective.	1	2	3	4 5
10. Accepting others' perspectives I always empathize with and am sensitive to the needs of others, which enables me to recognize and accept different points of view.	1	2	3	4 5
11. Aligning goals I always manage my behavior during social interactions so I am able to align my goals with the goals of others.	1	2	3	4 5
12. Managing conflict I continually manage conflict effectively and strive to create win–win solutions by constructively influencing the behavior of others and using effective communication and persuasion strategies.	1	2	3	4 5

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total Score**

### Evaluation:

- 54–60 = Excellent interpersonal skills
- 47–53 = Good interpersonal skills
- 40–46 = Average interpersonal skills
- 33–39 = Weak interpersonal skills
- Below 33 = Poor interpersonal skills

© 2016 VentureQuest Ltd, LLC Courtney Price, Ph.D., CEO and Founder. For over 30 years, VentureQuest has worked with corporations, entrepreneurs, universities, federal laboratories, and governmental agencies helping them develop managers and leaders, market opportunities, and commercializing new ideas. This Interpersonal Skill Checklist has been adapted from one of VentureQuest's leadership assessment tools.

## Exercise 1–G Reflection/Action Plan

This chapter focused on self-awareness—what it is, why it is important, and how to acquire and increase the degree to which you possess it. Other elements that comprise the self, including personality, attitude, and emotional intelligence, were also discussed. Complete the following worksheet after reading all material and doing experiential activities for this chapter.

1. The one or two areas in which I am most strong are:

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2. The one or two areas in which I need more improvement are:

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3. If I did only one thing to improve in this area, it would be to:

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4. Making this change would probably result in:

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5. If I did not change or improve in this area, it would probably affect my personal and professional life in the following ways:

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## 2

## Self-Disclosure and Trust

### Learning Points

How do I:

- Improve my personal and professional relationships?
- Learn to trust others, especially when trust has been broken?
- Determine the appropriate amount to disclose to others?
- Use situational cues to guide self-disclosure and trust?
- Share my feelings about and reactions to people and situations, in addition to facts?
- Demonstrate that I can be trusted?

*Emily Townsend has been on the fast track at the investment firm for which she has worked for five years. She entered graduate school shortly after graduating with honors from an elite university in the Northeast. While in graduate school she interned with an investment firm in New York City that at the time was co-headed by Michael White, a close friend of the family. During her tenure at the firm, she exceeded all performance expectations and rose to the rank of vice president within three years. Now she is in line for another promotion, but her performance has slacked off. Her record is inconsistent. One minute she appears to be at the top of her game, the next she is preoccupied and unreliable.*

*Her immediate supervisor, Hannah Montgomery, has tried to talk with Emily about her inconsistent performance, to no avail. Hannah, a director in the firm, placed a call to Michael White. Michael no longer heads the firm, but often serves as a sounding board to senior management on important personnel and client issues in his role as senior partner. Hannah has requested that Michael meet with Emily.*

*After an initial greeting, Michael praises Emily for her past performance with the firm and then expresses concern over her current performance. Emily responds by revealing that she feels she is in over her head. "Promise not to tell anyone," she pleads, and begins to discuss numerous personal incidents that are affecting her performance, such as the breakup of a long-standing romance, financial problems brought on by overextending her credit, and a falling out with her family over their concerns about her lack of interest in getting married, having children, and settling down.*

*While sympathetic, Michael is dismayed at what he learns from Emily about her troubles. He concludes that Emily's personal problems are detracting from her ability to focus on her job. Michael recommends to Emily's supervisor that she be let go as soon as a "legitimate" opportunity presents itself. One such opportunity is the upcoming announcement that due to the growth of online investment companies, the firm will be less reliant on the individuals at Emily's level.*

1. What could Emily have done to minimize the degree to which her personal problems spilled over into work?
2. Did Emily disclose too much about herself, setting herself up for a negative recommendation from Michael?
3. How would you have handled this situation?
4. Did Michael overstep his bounds in his conversation with Emily about her performance? What about the promise he made to her?

*“Trust no one. Not your closest advisors, your spouse, your brother, your God. Trust only yourself, or you will face pain every day of your life.”<sup>1</sup>*

These harsh words were spoken by the Egyptian pharaoh portrayed by Cedric Hardwicke in the classic movie, *The Ten Commandments*. Fortunately, times have changed and we now know better! While it is good advice to not be too trusting early in a relationship, the best relationships—in life and in business—are those that are built on mutual trust. Trust is built through a combination of shared experiences over time and willingness to talk with others about aspects of yourself that are relevant to your relationships. This chapter discusses self-disclosure and trust, their meaning and importance in life and in business.

## What Is Self-Disclosure?

**Self-disclosure** means making the self known to others,<sup>2</sup> letting others know what you think, feel, and want. It is revealing personal information to another that results in an enhanced and trusting personal or business relationship.<sup>3</sup> By revealing information about yourself, you allow others to be better able to understand what “makes you tick”—your motivations, fears, work style, strengths, and weaknesses. This knowledge helps others to determine strategies for working effectively with you. In addition, as you self-disclose, others reciprocate, enabling you to better develop strategies for understanding and working effectively with them.

## Why Is Self-Disclosure Important?

Self-disclosure benefits both individuals and their relationships. Individuals who self-disclose reap psychological and physiological benefits. By self-disclosing and reciprocating others’ self-disclosure, we can improve our communication and relationships with others.

- *Sharing with others about ourselves or problems we are facing often brings an enormous sense of psychological relief.*<sup>4</sup> Think about a time you did poorly on an exam or ended a relationship with a significant other. How did you handle the situation? Some go for a long walk, cry, sleep, or exercise; most will eventually talk to a friend or loved one. Through disclosing to others, we gain an added perspective that helps us see our disappointment or frustration in a different light.
- *Disclosing to an appropriate person (one who is sympathetic, supportive, trustworthy, and a good listener) can help us validate our perceptions of reality.* By hearing ourselves talk, we process thoughts in our head that help us to better understand the current situation in which we are involved. Often this brings with it a self-validation that tells us either our thoughts are on the right track or our thoughts and perceptions need some tweaking. Imagine you are distraught over a strained customer interaction and fear the customer will cease to do business with your firm. Being new to the firm, you are unsure how management will respond to this “error” and decide to get a co-worker’s opinion on the situation. You disclose the situation and your concerns with her; she responds by not only agreeing with how you handled the situation, but also by providing information that this customer has a reputation for “being difficult.” You can see how self-disclosure can open us up to new information about ourselves that improves our ability to look at the world through realistic—rather than idealistic—lenses.
- *Self-disclosure can help reduce stress and tension.* By “getting things off your chest,” you feel as if a burden has been lifted. If a customer was verbally abusive toward you or a co-worker took credit for your contributions, you are likely to bottle up your feelings in the interest of appearing professional. However, should these feelings remain unexpressed, you might explode! By sharing your problems or concerns with others, you might find ways to resolve them. Even if you find no resolution, you might feel relieved that you are not alone in your feelings—misery loves company. This intimacy brings us closer to others and increases our comfort in knowing that stress reduction through self-disclosure is available now and in the future in our relationships.
- *Self-disclosure improves us physiologically.* By sharing ourselves with others, our stress levels go down, lowering anxiety and altering vital signs such as heart rate and blood pressure. Self-disclosure positively affects the mind–body connection and can lead to better physical—and emotional—health.<sup>5</sup> This concept is one of the core tenets of counseling and hotline/crisis-prevention programs.
- *Self-disclosure can result in clearer lines of communication with others.* By showing our willingness to self-disclose and encouraging others to share self-information with us, we improve our ability to understand diverse perspectives and viewpoints. We become more confident in our ability to clarify others’ intentions and meanings, and in giving feedback and having open discussions that minimize uncertainty and confusion.
- *Self-disclosure can lead to strengthened, enhanced relationships with people in our personal life, colleagues, and clients.* As co-workers get to know each other, disclosure leads to liking, which leads to more disclosure, which leads to more liking—a

cyclical effect that also occurs with supervisors and clients. Without self-disclosure, the level of intimacy and trust will be lower than in a group that discloses freely and appropriately. With disclosure comes trust, and with trust comes collaboration.<sup>6</sup> Such collaboration and trust are essential to strong relationships and also to innovation, which is critical for organizations to compete and survive.<sup>7</sup>

- *Self-disclosure affects team productivity.* The more co-workers enjoy working together, the more productive they can be on projects and in team situations.<sup>8</sup> For example, when working as a team under a tight deadline, knowledge of one another's work styles can help a team pull together and produce a top-quality project even when operating under time pressure. Conversely, a team that has not gotten to know one another will have difficulty pulling together on a tough assignment. This explains why team-building—processes and activities undertaken to help team members identify with one another and the team as a whole—is strongly endorsed by many organizations.
- *Self-disclosure can create a trusting environment that is conducive to promoting long-term relationships with employees, customers, and suppliers.* Open communication is essential in dealing with and managing conflict, making effective decisions, and enhancing organizational culture. By building relationships through mutual self-disclosure, employees and management will develop open lines of communication. Self-disclosure between customers and suppliers will open the doors to long-term relationships critical for the future viability of an organization.<sup>9</sup>
- *Self-disclosure also has benefits for people globally.* Culture plays an important role in shaping our personality and communication style, and, like self-awareness in **Chapter 1**, self-disclosure is influenced by cultural rules and norms. Typically, Americans tend to disclose to many people but in less depth, while non-Westerners confide to fewer individuals but in greater depth. Consequently the level of intimacy in friendships may be higher in non-Western cultures than in Western ones.<sup>10</sup> Knowing how and when and to whom to disclose in different cultures is an important skill to master as you carve out a career that has global elements to it.
- *When used appropriately, self-disclosure can strengthen online communication.* Disclosure is much more common now for many more individuals due to the prominence of interacting with family, friends, co-workers, and even strangers online. Right or wrong, we are becoming more accustomed to sharing information about ourselves in online social network communities. This can be positive when done appropriately—it is an easy way to connect on a regular basis with many individuals in your network—personally and professionally, domestically and globally. Surprisingly, this type of communication can actually enhance trust in relationships over time, as you exchange information that becomes more substantive and mutually beneficial.

## Online Self-Disclosure<sup>11</sup>

Trust and control over information play a central role in our online self-disclosure behaviors. In online environments, if we perceive a threat to our privacy, we are more wary about disclosing information about ourselves. But when we trust the source, are assured privacy checks are in place, and have a higher degree of control over what we can choose to share, we disclose more personal information. Internet users, and particularly young people, do not have privacy fears as long as these conditions—trust and control—are met.

- *Disclosure can improve organizational communication.* Companies are beginning to see some positive outcomes of their employees and customers using self-disclosure in online communities. Innovation, market research, brand ambassador programs, support forums, customer motivation, positive reviews, and increased sales are some of the benefits being cited by organizations that make it possible for their employees and customers to be connected to them through social media.<sup>12</sup>

## Strategies for Self-Disclosure

Effective self-disclosure includes these elements:<sup>13</sup>

- **Feelings as well as facts**—When you share your feelings about or reactions to others, let them get to know the real you. Saying you have three co-workers is interesting information, but revealing the kind of relationship you have with them helps others get to know you better.

- **Transparency**—When you share information either face to face or online, to the extent that you can, prepare in advance, think twice before “speaking,” and provide details as appropriate to ensure those with whom you are interacting have the necessary information. Speak openly and transparently without hidden agendas. This will build trust and ensure your comments are taken as genuine. This will in turn encourage a similar tone and openness from others.
- **Authenticity**—Authenticity is becoming a “currency of exchange” in online communications.<sup>14</sup> Anyone can “google” you or look at your **social networking sites (SNS)** like LinkedIn, Facebook, or Twitter and glean quite a bit of information from you. Make sure that the way you are presenting yourself in meetings and interactions is consistent with what people may already know about you from your online presence.
- **Greater breadth and depth over time**—Have you ever cared about someone but felt uncomfortable sharing your feelings? In order for self-disclosure to facilitate building a relationship, it has to grow gradually in depth (becoming more revealing about your feelings toward a particular issue or set of issues) and breadth (expanding the discussion to cover more issues, such as work, family, leisure, and core beliefs).<sup>15</sup>
- **A focus on the present rather than the past**—While sharing about your past might help explain why you behave the way you do, it is not advisable to share all your past skeletons. Doing so might feel cathartic, but it also might leave you feeling vulnerable, especially if this disclosure is not reciprocated. Stay in the present.
- **Reciprocity**—To the degree possible, try to match the level of self-disclosure offered by people with whom you become acquainted. Be careful not to overdisclose prematurely, before the relationship has had time to build familiarity and trust.<sup>16</sup> Don’t be afraid to take the first important step to building a relationship. Lead by example, and others will follow suit. If they don’t, pull back.

## Self-Description

Self-disclosure is different from self-description.

- **Self-description** is the disclosure of nonthreatening information such as age, address, major, or organization for which you work. Self-disclosure is revealing significant personal information about yourself that exceeds the expectations of the moment<sup>17</sup> and that is not easily apparent to others, such as how you feel about issues that are important to you.

- **Some amount of risk**—Not surprisingly, self-disclosure has an element of risk. At times, you may share information that might affect others’ perceptions and acceptance of you as a person. For every action, there is a reaction, and in the case of self-disclosure, the benefits far outweigh the risks. People who engage in healthy, give-and-take dialogue with others are good managers of other people and of their relationships with others.
- **Work focus**—We are accustomed to sharing information with people in our lives with whom we are intimate: our parents, loved ones, and close friends. The lesson here is that even in work situations, it is important for project team members and co-workers to get to know each other personally. Naturally there are limits to what is expected and to what is appropriate. There is no need to disclose information of such a personal nature that it becomes awkward or embarrassing for you or your co-worker. And given the prevalence of sexual harassment incidents, we are all well advised to restrict our disclosing to “safe” subjects. A rule of thumb to use is this: If the information would help a co-worker or colleague better understand how to work with you in the present, then the information is probably relevant and should be disclosed. If the information has little or nothing to do with the project you are working on, your ability to do the job, or your work style, it is probably less relevant and does not need to be shared.

## Concerns about Self-Disclosure

The importance of self-disclosure in business has long been recognized in terms of building client and employee relationships. As organizations become less hierarchical and more team based, employees have less structure and fewer authority figures to rely on, increasing their need to work collaboratively in making decisions and getting things done. In other words, we can’t rely on bosses to issue directives and achieve results based on sheer possession of authority. Collaboration depends to a certain extent on trust. And trust is fostered through self-disclosure.

What does this mean for those who are shy or reserved? Or who come from families or cultures in which self-disclosing is frowned upon? Or who are afraid to disclose themselves to others? Or for people who have been hurt by disclosing information to others who have used it against them?

You may be uncomfortable or hesitate to disclose information about yourself to co-workers for several reasons. First, you may be uncertain about how the information will be received and utilized. Will it be used against you in a performance appraisal? Will it be revealed to others outside the immediate work situation? You may come from a culture in which talking about yourself is discouraged. Or you may be more of an introvert who processes internally and discloses very selectively. You may be afraid of being judged harshly by others, concerned that things said in one context might be repeated in an unrelated context. You might have had previous negative experiences with self-disclosure in personal situations, affecting your willingness to be open in work situations. For example, it is quite common early in a close relationship to reveal much about yourself before the other person is willing to open up. If one says “I love you” and the other, now feeling threatened by the implied commitment, says nothing, the original discloser will withhold any further disclosure. Or perhaps you revealed something personal to a co-worker only to have that person violate the trust by disclosing the information to someone else. If you have a low self-image, this will inhibit your willingness to self-disclose out of a fear of being judged negatively.

All of these concerns are valid. However, the very act of appropriate self-disclosure can improve your well-being. Self-disclosure is best when met with responsiveness, caring, understanding, and support.<sup>18</sup> If you can find a friend or colleague who offers this level of support, it is a good first step in the process of learning how to disclose in a safe environment.

Sometimes managers fear self-disclosure because they are concerned that others, especially subordinates, will perceive their willingness to share as a weakness or a shortcoming, leaving them vulnerable. Paradoxically, those managers who are willing to self-disclose in appropriate ways are often viewed very favorably by their co-workers. This happens because subordinates are able to see the manager as more human—complete with strengths and vulnerabilities—than before, allowing subordinates to feel closer to and interested in their manager.

The popularity of the Internet and **computer-mediated communication (CMC)**, communication occurring through the use of electronic devices, as opposed to **face-to-face (FTF) communication**, as a method to meet new people, initiate and carry on meaningful conversations, and build long-term relationships raises interesting issues about the quantity and quality of online self-disclosure. Are online communications more, or less, conducive to self-disclosure? The Internet provides a forum for quick self-disclosure with individuals you don’t know well. It can provide an anonymity that can lead to inappropriate self-disclosure. It also has the potential to lead to communication that, because of the lack of verbal and nonverbal cues, can appear to be abrasive, impulsive, and even abusive. Be aware, too, that gender can play a role in CMC self-disclosure. An investigation into gender-based patterns of college student self-disclosure on the Internet revealed females were more likely than males to disclose personal information and to be more aware of their self-disclosure behaviors. Males reported they were more likely to disclose negative statements than females.<sup>19</sup>

As with any new development, there are risks in online self-disclosure. Revealing and obtaining personal information on the Internet is correlated potentially with legal issues such as defamation, harassment, intellectual property rights, and others. Online bullying and berating others for their beliefs have become too frequent. The promise of “anonymity” seems to be encouraging some people to use the Internet as a forum for making controversial and offensive statements.<sup>20</sup> However, by following the guidelines for self-disclosure and building trust in this chapter, CMC has the potential to be as beneficial as FTF interactions.<sup>21</sup>

The benefits of self-disclosure far outweigh the concerns. If you are not used to talking about yourself to others, you will want to start slowly and with people you can trust. As you get to know a person or members of a group, gradually reveal information that helps others understand how to work effectively with you. As they disclose to you, you can increase your level of disclosure accordingly.

By following your instincts about what is appropriate and relevant, you will eventually find that it feels quite natural to talk about yourself with others. Soon you will find your project team members and co-workers will appreciate getting to know you, and that together you will be able to produce results beyond what was possible when you—and they—were more reserved.

## Some Guidelines for Self-Disclosure

- *Discuss situations as they happen; don’t wait until they are old news.*<sup>22</sup> The impact of your disclosure will be greater and more understandable within the context of your relationship when you share your thoughts and reactions to situations at the time instead of days, weeks, or months later. For example, if you are a member of a team evaluating the potential adoption of a new sales management system, withholding your concerns about the

viability of this new system might prove problematic. On the one hand, you are concerned that others may look at you as too rigid or unable to accept change. However, you may have information or concerns that, if shared, would completely alter the decision-making process—in a way that would benefit your organization.

- *Choose the appropriate time and place.* Just as you may not choose to propose marriage in a crowded bar or noisy restaurant, you wouldn't want to tell your boss of your need for personal time right after he shares news that the department is being downsized.
- *Choose the appropriate level of disclosure.* Match the depth and breadth of your disclosure to the situation. You would be ill-advised to reveal your innermost dreams and fears to your boss on the first day of your new job.
- *Be cautious when sharing personal details* or details regarding your employer online. Share personal information on sites frequented by your friends and family; save information of a more professional nature for LinkedIn or group chats.
- *Share your current feelings to create an emotional connection with others and invite understanding.* You can focus on your feelings without having to act on them. Expressing your feelings, as opposed to focusing strictly on facts, can also stimulate reciprocal disclosure and initiate important conversation.<sup>23</sup>
- *Be sensitive to cultural differences.* Look into the business customs of the home countries of your classmates and co-workers. Understand what is appropriate and effective before attempting disclosure.
- *Safeguard your online presence.* Don't post photos that are compromising of you or others. Get others' permission before posting photos or information about them. Be careful to not be perceived as a bully or partake in the stereotyping of a group. Resist the urge to rant about politics. Don't post content that could be embarrassing if viewed by an employer.

## The Role of Self-Disclosure in Increasing Self-Awareness

We have discussed the many benefits of self-disclosure in the business world. While it is important to disclose to others, it is equally important to be honest with ourselves about our strengths and weaknesses, as we noted in **Chapter 1**. Sometimes this is difficult because we see ourselves differently than others see us or because we're not completely in touch with our inner selves—who we really are, what we believe, and how we come across to others. A concept that explains why this is true is the Johari window.<sup>24</sup> Created by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingram, the **Johari window** helps us understand how well we know ourselves and how much of ourselves we let others know. The Johari window is depicted in **Figure 2-1** in a grid that is divided into four regions, which represent the intersection of two axes:

1. Degree to which you know or understand information about yourself (values, attitudes, beliefs).
2. Degree to which others know information about you.

The basic premise of the Johari window is that our personal and professional relationships can be greatly improved through understanding ourselves in depth and then selecting those aspects of self that are appropriate to share with others. The more we share of ourselves with others, the more we can develop high-quality relationships. In order to complete this exchange, we must be fully aware of those aspects of ourselves that are “hidden” from view and those that we neither see nor know ourselves.

The **open area** consists of information about us that both we and others know, such as our name, job title or role, level in the organization, and possibly something about our personal life such as our marital status or the college from which we graduated. When we first begin a relationship, the open window is relatively small. We begin with safe information, such as the weather, school, and sports. As we build a relationship, we disclose more facts and feelings about ourselves and our beliefs, and the window enlarges vertically, reducing the hidden area. The larger the open area, the more productive and mutually beneficial the interpersonal relationship is likely to be.

The **hidden area** comprises information we know about ourselves but is hidden from others. This information can range from our concerns about a boss or job to financial, family, or health problems. Not sharing hidden information can create a barrier that protects a person in the short term. Over time, this lack of sharing can lead to distrust and miscommunication. In business this can have negative consequences such as reduced trust and morale. As we increase our comfort with and practice disclosing more and more information about ourselves through shared experiences with others, the hidden area shrinks. If we are more reserved, this area will remain rather large, resulting in relationships that aren't likely to develop beyond the acquaintance level.

The **blind area** denotes information others are aware of but we are not. For example, we might have an unknown nervous habit of tapping a pencil or wiggling a foot during meetings when we are feeling stressed or bored. We might see ourselves as patient and helpful, yet our subordinates see us as micromanagers. As we receive feedback from others on their observations of our per-

sonalities and behaviors, the blind area will decrease and the open area will become more complete. The more we understand our strengths and weaknesses and are open to others' views of us, the better managers we can be of our personal and work lives.

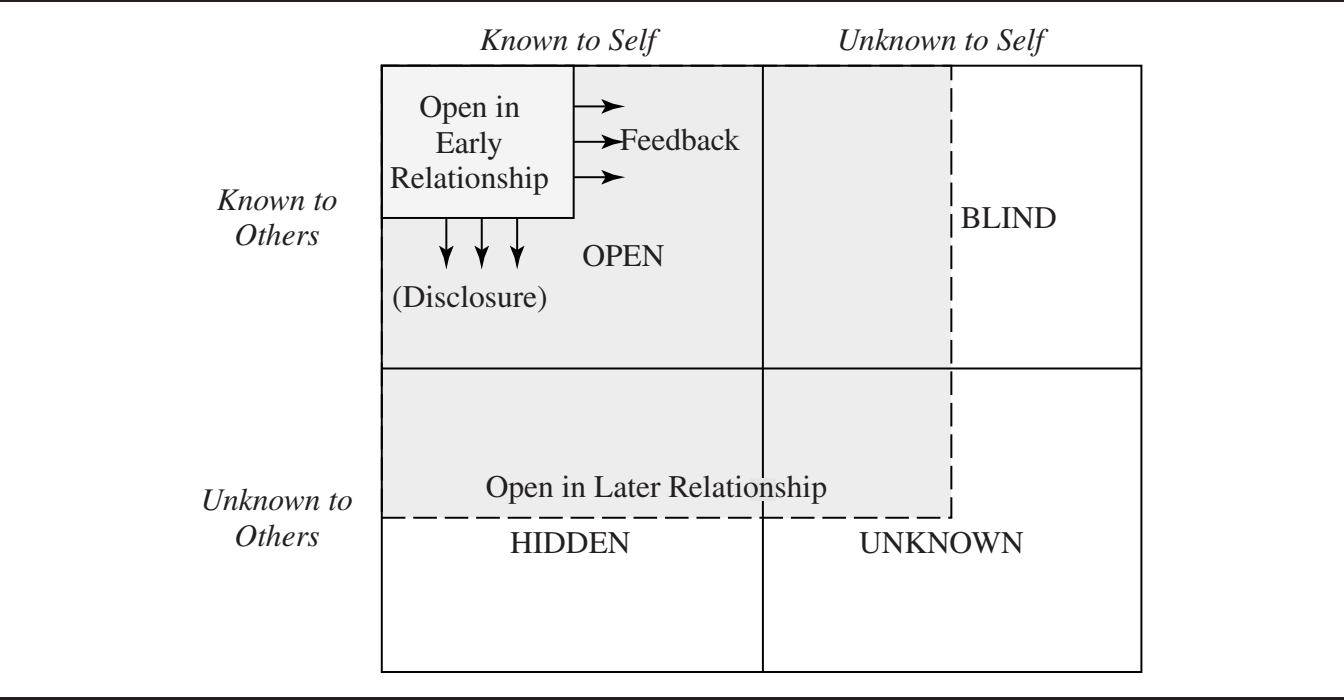
The **unknown area** contains information that neither we nor others know. This window is unknown due to our lack of experience or exposure to various situations, or due to our inability to process difficult events that occurred earlier in our lives. Until we have experienced certain things in life, we will not fully know how we will react or feel. Until others have seen us in certain situations or we have disclosed to them how we behaved or felt, this information will remain unknown to them. For example, the first time you felt you loved someone other than a family member, you may have found those feelings hard to express. How you express love may be unknown to you and to your significant other. This unknown window can also contain information that is forgotten or purposely suppressed. This window can become smaller over time as we grow, develop, and learn. Personal growth is a process. Self-awareness allows us to assimilate our experiences and move beyond them, rather than being unaware of, or worse, paralyzed by them. It also allows us to move forward in a positive way as we experience life and learn from both our successes and our mistakes.

What Is Trust?

**Trust** is one's faith or belief in the integrity or reliability of another person or thing. Trust means confidence. When you trust people, you believe in them—in their integrity and in their abilities.<sup>25</sup> By adding trust to self-disclosure, we are able to complete the relationship equation. The more you trust, the more you disclose, and the more you disclose, the more you trust. In business, as in life, trust is an essential building block in developing relationships with customers, colleagues, and business associates. Trust is very difficult to develop, and it is very easy to destroy.<sup>26</sup> Think of a relationship you've had where trust has been broken. Perhaps a promised raise didn't materialize, a client misrepresented his or her financial situation, or a friend informed you that your significant other—who was attending a conference in another state—was seen with someone else. Isn't it difficult to relate to the person who disappointed you now or believe that person's promises? Does the lack of trust make you less inclined to make plans or have anything to do with this person?

Self-disclosure + Trust = Stronger relationships

FIGURE 2-1 The Johari Window



## Why Is Trust Important?

Trust is essential in the work environment. Research has shown that trust in the workplace promotes cooperation and effective teamwork and can lead to enhanced organizational performance.<sup>27</sup> Clients and customers need to be able to rely on information a company and its employees provide. Subordinates need to be able to trust their managers, managers need to be able to trust senior management, and everyone needs to be able to expect consistent reactions from their co-workers and associates. Trust is a necessary foundation for a healthy work environment. Without trust, employees may focus on self-protection—weakening their willingness to cooperate and collaborate, damaging their motivation, and thwarting innovative and productive work.<sup>28</sup>

- *Individual impact*—The role of trust in organizations begins at the individual level. Trust is what binds leaders and followers together. In order to build trust, communication and action must be consistent. By demonstrating consistency, integrity, and concern, and by sharing organizational information straightforwardly and accurately, a leader's trustworthy behavior can promote and foster trust.<sup>29</sup>
- *Organizational impact*—The seemingly endless stream of stories about corporate misbehavior has contributed to a steady erosion of trust in corporate America. When organization members violate trust with stakeholders, organizations lose stakeholder confidence. Losing confidence and integrity can lead to the eventual demise of the institution. Trust is built up on the basis of past experience.<sup>30</sup> In order to regain the trust of employees, stockholders, and the general public, leaders must first prove they are trustworthy, hence regaining integrity and confidence for their organizations.

## Concerns about Building Trust

While an essential component of good relationships, trust does not come without some element of risk. Trusting is a two-way street. The person who places confidence in an individual must rely on that person to treat the information that was given in confidence. The element of risk is compounded by the inability of the truster to monitor or control the other party. For this reason trust is best when built up over time. As we gain experience with the judgments and behaviors of others, we can gradually build confidence in their ability to follow through on commitments and keep their word.

The development of trust in relationships may be affected by attribution theory (discussed in **Chapter 1**).<sup>31</sup> As defined, the bias of the fundamental attribution error causes individuals to overestimate the influence of internal factors on the behavior of others. Since trust in relationships is directly impacted by the behaviors of others, we tend to determine that a trustworthy or untrustworthy action by a friend or co-worker was controlled by them rather than the situation. Because this bias greatly impacts individual perception, it is easy to see how quickly trust can be destroyed. Managers must be aware of their judgments and attributions to clearly determine if a perceived untrustworthy behavior warrants the loss of trust in a co-worker. Perhaps it had nothing to do with your relationship and instead simply resulted from the situation.

## Strategies for Building Trust

Trust is composed of five elements.<sup>32</sup> (See **Figure 2-2**.) You are more likely to be seen as trustworthy if you demonstrate these characteristics:

- **Integrity**—honesty and sincerity. In short, you say what you mean and mean what you say. Integrity also relates to your ability to honestly disclose and share your thoughts, beliefs, and feelings.
- **Competence**—knowledge and ability. You are aware of your strengths and limitations, offering help where you can and seeking resources and assistance when needed.
- **Consistency**—conformity with previous practice; good judgment in handling situations. When you are consistent, for example, you do what you say you will do; friends and associates believe in your ability to follow through and do the right thing in a given situation.
- **Loyalty**—faithfulness to your friends and ideals. A trustworthy person supports friends and associates both within and outside their presence. One who sings your praises in front of you, but then spreads rumors behind your back is not only duplicitous but also untrustworthy.
- **Openness**—welcomes new ideas; willing to share ideas with others. This component of trust suggests that you are aware of yourself and comfortable sharing and disclosing with others. In addition, when someone shares with you, you encourage them and offer acceptance and support, as opposed to judgment and ridicule. Openness has been found to be the most important trust factor for employees in an organizational setting.<sup>33</sup>

**FIGURE 2–2 Five Elements of Trust**

Competence	Consistency	Loyalty	Openness
Integrity			
(without integrity, all other elements may be meaningless)			

## Personal Trust-Builders

We can take some tangible actions to build others' trust in us (see **Exercise 2–H**). Some of these include the following:

- Follow through on promises and commitments made, and remember the opposite—don't promise what you can't produce.
- Don't reveal confidences told you in private.
- Avoid participating in unnecessary gossip about specific individuals.
- Don't make self-flattering or boasting statements about your capabilities.
- Develop a reputation for loyalty—a willingness to stand by, protect, and save face for others.
- Be consistent: Reliability and predictability help others build faith in your ability to deliver on promises made.
- Be realistic: Don't overcommit to the extent that you break promises.
- Develop personal competence: When you improve your knowledge and skills, people can count on you to hold up your end of the bargain.
- Gain a reputation for honesty and truthfulness: "Say what you mean and mean what you say."
- Make sure your actions are consistent with your spoken words: "Walk the talk."

## Organizational Trust-Builders

Organizations with low or no trust are susceptible to a range of negative employee responses, including high turnover, reduced job satisfaction, less cooperation, and increased absenteeism.<sup>34</sup> These behaviors often exist in organizations going through a merger or acquisition. As the products, services, employees, and cultures of two or more companies are joined together, clashes inevitably result. The more openly and effectively each company can communicate with its employees about the changes as they occur, the better the employees will be able to adjust and move forward in their work on behalf of the newly merged organization. Those companies that make information available to their employees are more successful at achieving their business goals than are those companies that keep their employees in the dark or misrepresent information to them.<sup>35</sup> Organizational cultures associated with trust emphasize:<sup>36</sup>

- Depth of relationships.
- Understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- Frequent, timely, and forthright communication.
- Member self-esteem and self-awareness.

- High levels of skill competence.
- Clarity of shared purpose, direction, and vision.
- Honoring promises and commitments.

## Ten Managerial Tips for Developing Trust<sup>37</sup>

1. Practice what you preach—narrow the gap between your intentions and your behavior.
2. Open lines of communication—declare your intentions to others and invite feedback on your performance.
3. Accept disagreements, differences of opinion, and conflict—when things go wrong and problems arise, seek solutions.
4. Keep confidential information confidential.
5. Let others know what you stand for and what you value.
6. Create an open environment—make it safe for others to be with you and to share with you.
7. Maintain a high level of integrity and honesty.
8. Know yourself and how others perceive you and your actions—build on your competencies and accept your limitations.
9. Build credibility with others by being consistent and reliable.
10. Avoid micromanaging—this sends the message that “I don’t trust you.”

## A Note of Caution about Trust

When you trust someone you give the person you are trusting, the trustee, a responsibility for actions or behaviors important to you that you cannot control. “Without vulnerability, trust is unnecessary.”<sup>38</sup>

Trust is not a right; it is earned. Trust is an aspect of relationships and it varies “within persons and across relationships.”<sup>39</sup> That is, we do not automatically trust every individual in every situation. In making the decision to trust you must assess trustworthiness by evaluating observable verbal and nonverbal cues that indicate the trustee consistently adheres to a set of principles you find acceptable such as honesty, reliability, strength, a sense of justice, and stability. Perhaps we might trust certain but not all aspects of a person. If your co-worker supports you, is loyal to you, and holds sensitive issues in confidence, you will trust her. However, if your co-worker reveals she has been unfaithful in her relationship with her spouse, suddenly her trustworthiness becomes suspect.

Our ability to trust is also situation-dependent. Trust depends on our having the information and experience needed to make good judgments in a given situation or situations. Trust is earned. It evolves over time, based on past successful experiences that build on each other to eventually build a climate of trust. “However, every sign of trustworthiness can be faked.”<sup>40</sup> A trustee can mimic the appearance of trustworthiness, lulling you into a false sense of security. “Thus, a little prudent paranoia and due diligence are warranted, especially in situations where the costs of misplaced or mistaken trust are high.”<sup>41</sup>

Trust is fragile. It is easier to destroy than it is to build. Consider the couple who have been together for 10, 20, or more years. One untrustworthy act could destroy decades of trusting behaviors, with trust likely never to fully return. By valuing and fostering trust and trustworthiness in your personal and professional relationships, you will be able to build mutually satisfying, long-term relationships in both your work and life.

## Rebuilding Trust

If it is easier to destroy trust than to build it, it is even harder to rebuild trust once it has been broken. Think of a time in your life when someone broke your trust in them—a friend who lied, a family member who cheated, a colleague who switched loyalties in the midst of a team project. Being lied to, being cheated on, or experiencing disloyalty from a good

friend can be very difficult. It would be normal to act out of anger or at least extreme disappointment. Other common initial reactions include feeling disbelief, suffering betrayal, experiencing loss of confidence, shutting down communications with the offender, joining with others against the offender, or developing a protective “shield” to protect yourself from further harm from the offender, and possibly others. Rebuilding trust isn’t easy, but it’s not impossible. Here are some tips.

**If you’re the person who violated another’s trust:**

- Apologize immediately, sincerely and fully.
- Let the person you offended know you value the relationship and will make changes to preserve the relationship going forward.
- Listen intently to their concerns. Let them speak. Don’t over-talk. Listen for understanding (see Chapter 6 for more on listening).
- Ask them what you can do to rebuild their trust in you.
- Commit to making the changes that are necessary to improve the relationship.
- Be patient. It takes time to rebuild trust (and may never happen).
- If things don’t work out, part amicably. Don’t be vindictive or bad-mouth the person. Put it behind you, using it as a learning lesson to improve your relationships in the future.

**If you’re the person who lost trust in another due to actions or words on their part:**

- It is okay to be angry, but if possible, don’t confront the person while you are angry. Wait for a less volatile time to talk or contact the individual.
- Consider if you want to keep the relationship. If you don’t, there is no obligation to approach the individual.
- If you do want to keep the relationship (or must, if they’re a colleague), do initiate contact with the offending person.
- Let the individual know what they did and why or how it affected you. (Some tips include using “I” language, avoiding words or tones that put them on the defensive, and sticking to your feelings about the situation.)
- Give the offending person a chance to explain the situation from their perspective and to make amends for their behavior or words.
- Let the person know what changes are necessary for the relationship to move forward positively.
- Be patient. It takes time to rebuild trust (and may never happen).
- If things don’t work out, part amicably. Don’t be vindictive or bad-mouth the person. Put it behind you, using it as a learning lesson to improve your relationships in the future.

## Summary

Self-disclosure and trust are two mutually reinforcing skills that, when practiced with the appropriate persons at the right time and place, can serve to deepen and improve personal and professional relationships. By letting another person know your values and your beliefs about and reactions to a situation, you not only improve your own understanding and concerns about a situation, but also improve the quality of communication, collaboration, and performance with that person. There are fears and risks associated with disclosure, however; knowing what, when, and how to disclose can serve to mitigate the fears and risks.

By letting others know you, you pave the way for them to develop trust in you. When others trust you, they are more likely to disclose to you. The mutually reinforcing nature of disclosure and trust forms the basis of healthy personal and professional relationships. Organizations that are characterized by a lack of trust, as is the case during times of change (i.e., downsizing and mergers), become primed for employee gossip, absenteeism, and turnover. Those who are characterized by openness and transparency are widely trusted and admired. By practicing the tips and techniques we shared, you can improve your skills in self-disclosure and trust and become more effective as an individual and as a manager.

## Key Terms and Concepts

Authenticity

Blind area

Competence

Computer-mediated communication (CMC)

Consistency

Face-to-face (FTF) communication

Hidden area

Integrity

Johari window

Loyalty

Open area

Openness

Reciprocity

Self-description

Self-disclosure

Social networking sites (SNS)

Transparency

Trust

Unknown area

## Discussion Questions

1. Self-disclosure has benefits, but it also has risks. Discuss both.
2. Was Emily Townsend's disclosure appropriate in the chapter-opening case? Why or why not?
3. With so much work being done by work teams, in what ways can self-disclosure improve team performance?
4. Have you ever worked for a boss you didn't trust? How was this a problem?
5. We might trust certain but not all aspects of a person. Do you agree or disagree?
6. How does trust impact organizations? How can untrustworthy members impact an entire organization? How can organizations ensure members will be trustworthy?
7. Comment on these statements: "Trust is fragile;" "Trust is earned."

## Endnotes

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## Exercise 2—A People Hunt

### Instructions

Mill around the classroom or training room or participate with your online learning community and identify people who can help you complete the following chart.\* Write the names of the people you identify in the "match" columns. Try not to use the same person more than three times in your chart. Challenge yourself to meet and talk with as many people as possible.

Information	Match 1	Match 2	Match 3
Same hobby or interest: _____			
Favorite outdoor activity: _____			
Same favorite music: _____			
Same favorite movie: _____			
Same favorite fast food: _____			
Same favorite color: _____			
Same number of siblings: _____			
Same hometown or country: _____			
Same favorite TV show: _____			