SECOND EDITION

HUMAN RELATIONS

The Art and Science of Building Effective Relationships

VIVIAN McCANN

Human Relations

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The Art and Science of Building Effective Relationships

SECOND EDITION

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Pearson

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Preface

Healthy relationships are the foundation of a meaningful life. Both personally and professionally, our ability to understand and communicate effectively with others can make the difference between a satisfying, fulfilling life, and one fraught with tension and frustration. But what does it take to build healthy relationships? Certainly good communication skills are a critical component—but alone, they are not enough. We also need a working knowledge of some basic psychological principles to understand how and why people in similar situations have very different interpretations and responses. And in our increasingly diverse society, we must also educate ourselves about cultural norms and the powerful ways they impact the effectiveness of our interactions with others.

This text breaks new ground in the study of human relations by integrating these three key components of successful relationships. First, some key psychological concepts are presented to help the reader understand both personal and situational influences on our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. With this as a foundation, development of basic communication skills in the second part of the text goes beyond the standard one-size-fits-all perspective. Instead, readers learn to consider the psychological influences on the individual with whom they are communicating, and tailor their communication skills accordingly. Multiculturalism, including issues of race and ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, and ability and disability, is woven throughout the text, so students emerge with the skills and understanding necessary to be effective in our multicultural world.

The subtitle of the text reflects the importance of both science and art in the development of good interpersonal relations. Every effort has been made to include the most rigorous scientific findings in psychology and communication, so the foundation provided is based on solid and credible research. This research provides the context for artful application of the communication skills and principles which follow. Numerous examples and activities are included in each chapter to illustrate how various principles apply differently in different situations and with different people, and students can practice various applications of the skills to their own lives in personal and professional settings. The ability to adapt one's communication skills to a variety of different situational and cultural contexts is indeed an art, and recognition of the importance of context is a key feature of this text.

Organization

The first few chapters lay the foundation for the study of human relations, and examine internal influences on our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Chapter 1 discusses the importance of context, and introduces several dimensions of culture which form a framework for understanding the diverse people of our world. Chapter 2 examines various aspects of the self and how it develops in childhood as well as throughout stages of adult life. Chapter 3 offers an overview of major personality theories, with an eye toward how these various perspectives can help us better understand others' behaviors as well as our own. Chapter 4 studies the role of emotions and stress in our relationships, including common irrational beliefs which influence emotions and how these beliefs can be overcome.

The next few chapters examine external or sociocultural influences on our relations with others. Chapter 5 introduces perception in human relations, including cognitive biases and physiological and cultural factors which influence perception, as well as an overview of how memory influences perception. Chapter 6 offers an in-depth look at conformity, principles of compliance, and obedience to authority. Chapter 7 focuses on prejudice, including its foundations in group formation, ethnocentrism, and stereotypes, as well as causes and consequences of prejudice and discrimination, and how to work toward overcoming them.

The subsequent chapters encompass communication principles and skill-building. Chapter 8 begins with development of the relational climate, and studies elements of listening, barriers to effective listening, and a variety of authentic listening styles. Chapter 9 presents basic skills and strategies in verbal and nonverbal communication, with four principles of communication as the framework: Language must be clear, responsible, culturally sensitive, and congruent. Chapter 10 examines various myths about conflict, as well as various personal conflict styles; it also includes ways to reduce defensiveness in oneself and others, and the win-win (or integrative) approach to conflict resolution.

The last chapter takes a broader look at human relations in our personal and professional lives. Chapter 11 includes key concepts in intimate relationships, such as love, attraction and mate selection, and key components in healthy long-term relationships. Gender and cultural issues and variations are included in every chapter, based on current research.

Pedagogy

Twenty-five years of experience teaching college students has taught me that information is only useful when students perceive it as engaging and relevant to their lives, so I've written the text in the same voice students hear from me in class. My goal is always to balance academic rigor with friendliness and accessibility, so many examples are included based on what students have shared, as well as my own life. I also firmly believe that students like to be challenged, as long as they perceive a way to meet that challenge, and this belief has guided development of the text as well. Although the tone is conversational, I tried hard not to oversimplify either the language or the concepts.

Numerous pedagogical features are integrated into the text in order to help students develop a strong working knowledge of each concept. First, ***Learning Objectives*** at the beginning of each section signal the main issues addressed in that section, and also provide a running outline for the material. Second, a number of ***Writing Prompts*** and ***Shared Writing Questions*** are integrated into each chapter, strategically placed to help students analyze and apply concepts as they are learning about them. These questions encourage specific application of topics and issues to the readers' own lives, as well as connections between concepts, so that they develop a deeper understanding both of the concepts and of their relevance. Throughout the chapters, several ***Activities, Examples,*** and ***Compare Your Thoughts*** boxes are provided that help students apply chapter concepts, practice communication skills, or gain additional insight into their own relations with others. Finally, ***figures and tables*** provide graphic synopses of key concepts.

New to this Edition

- **Chapter-opening vignettes:** These vignettes not only set the stage for chapter concepts with interesting stories, they provide a foundation for student learning throughout the chapter. Based on the scientifically sound pedagogy of Problem-Based Learning (PBL), each vignette presents a puzzle of human relations. As students work their way through the chapter, pieces of the puzzle are revealed to help the student "solve the puzzle," thus developing a deeper understanding of human relations.
- **Extensive content about new communication technologies:** The proliferation of communication technologies, such as texting, email and instant messaging, Skype, Twitter, and social networking, continues to impact and modify the way we communicate. New research indicates these technologies are also changing our expectations about communication, our relationships, and even our identities. This second edition includes provocative findings that help explain and understand how trends in relational patterns are inextricably linked to the forms of communication used in that relationship.
- **Activities and self-assessments:** One of the hallmarks of this text is the integration of activities and self-assessments that help students apply the concepts to their own lives immediately after learning about them. As a result, they develop a deeper understanding of relational processes, including enhanced insight into their own relational strengths and growth points. The second edition expands the array of activities and self-assessments to offer faculty and students more science-based assessments, group activities, and an overall greater variety of choices—all of which are easily adapted to either an online or face-to-face classroom.

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Available Instructor Resources

Ancillary materials for this text include:

Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank. The Instructor's Resource Manual includes key learning objectives, self-contained class lectures and activities for each chapter, and discussion ideas.

PowerPoint Lecture Slides. These slides are intended to be the basis not only for class lectures, but also for class discussions. The slides also feature prominent figures and tables from the text.

Acknowledgments

This second edition would not have come to fruition without the strong and consistent support of my dearest family,

some wonderful colleagues, my editorial teams at Pearson and Aptara, and many wonderful students. First and foremost are my husband and son, who endured countless nights and weekends on their own while I toiled away in my office on this labor of love. To them go my deepest thanks for understanding when I missed family events, for putting up with way too much take-out and fast food when I didn't have time to cook, for making me laugh at the most unexpected (and necessary!) times, and mostly for being the true heart and the greatest joys of my life. I am also fortunate to have many supportive colleagues who provided valuable feedback on the first edition of this text: These wonderful folks include Lauren Kuhn, Cynthia Golledge, Richard Lazere, Tani McBeth, Rich Reiner, April Kindrick, Amy Kassler, Jan Woodcock, Sonja Olshove, and Bob Johnson. Special thanks also to my fantastic teams at Pearson and Aptara for shepherding this edition into the brave new world of digital publishing: Carly Czech, Angela Mallowes, Rashida Patel, Mickey Mankus, Julie Kelly, Ben Ferrini, Bimbabati Sen, and the many support staff who assisted in the process.

I was extremely fortunate to have many outstanding reviewers provide feedback on drafts of the manuscript, both in developing the first edition and in revising the second edition. Their thoughtful perspective, careful attention to detail, and astute suggestions were invaluable, and truly made this a much better text. Finally, I am indebted to the many students I have had the pleasure of teaching and learning with throughout my career. Their interesting and diverse selves continue to stimulate, challenge, and enhance my worldview and my life.

I have learned from all of you, and for that I thank you.

Vivian McCann

Chapter 1
Foundations of Human Relations

In our increasingly diverse world, how can we use psychology to help us learn to communicate effectively and build healthy relationships?

Learning Objectives

1.1 Describe two reasons to develop good human relations

1.2 Explain how context affects our everyday lives

1.3 Explain the role of psychology in learning about human relations

1.4 Explain how generational differences influence values of that generation

1.5 Compare and contrast the use of nationality as the basis for cultural exploration

"You want to do *what?*" roared Tessa's father, eyebrows raised and a look of disbelief on his face.

"It's not that big of a deal, Dad," argued Tessa. "Lots of students take time off school to travel. This is a great opportunity to learn about other cultures, and it will look great on my résumé when I graduate."

"You just want to party," snickered her younger brother Nico.

"Nico, stay out of this," Tessa retorted. Her voice took on a pleading tone. "Dad, seriously, when I will ever get another opportunity like this?" She went on to explain how her two good friends, Kari and Jesse, were taking a year off school to backpack around the world, and had invited her to go along. They were taking on second jobs this summer to save up, and when they left next year they wanted to spend a few months on each of the major continents. They would hitchhike from town to town, taking odd jobs here and there to help pay their way. They had it all planned out.

"No daughter of mine is going to throw away her college education to go hitchhiking around the world like some kind of nomad," declared Tessa's dad. "Your mother

and I have worked hard all our lives to try to give you and your brother a better life, and you want to just throw it all away? Absolutely not. And what about your grandmother? She relies on you to help her in the afternoons—have you thought about that? Are you just going to abandon her? What has gotten into you, coming up with these wild ideas?"

Tessa's heart sank. "Mom, can't you reason with him? It's not like I'm throwing away my education—I just want to see the world, and this is my chance. Nico can help Grandma while I'm gone. It'll only be for a year. . . ." Her voice trailed off as her mother started shaking her head. "I can't really believe you are asking this, Tessa," she replied. "You know Nico is helping at your dad's shop after school. And to just leave your family and your school to go traveling around the world? It's too dangerous, so many things could happen, and it's just not the kind of thing a young girl should do. Your father is right. You should finish your education—then maybe we can consider a trip somewhere with a reputable, organized group."

Tessa sighed loudly and rolled her eyes in frustration. "You just don't understand me—you have no idea who I am and what is important to me!" She left the room in tears, wondering if her parents had ever been young.

While you may not have had this exact conversation with your own parents (or children), chances are it reminds you of one: Perhaps the particular topic was different, but the general feeling and tone were probably similar. After all, isn't "becoming your own person" a big part of growing up? You may be surprised to learn that it isn't necessarily true in all cultures—which may explain some of the disagreement between Tessa and her parents, who grew up in different cultures. In fact, their differences will set the stage for several major concepts we will introduce to you as we begin our study of human relations. And, by the end of this chapter, you should be able to identify at least four concepts in human relations that help explain why Tessa and her parents had such different viewpoints about her desire to travel with her friends. Think you're up to the challenge? Read on!

1.1: Why Study Human Relations?

1.1 Describe two reasons to develop good human relations

Effective interpersonal skills play a bigger role in the success or failure of relationships—whether business or personal—than any other contributing factor.

Surprised? You're not alone. Our society endorses a multitude of myths that contradict this scientific truth. The phrase "Love conquers all," for example, implies that if two people love each other enough, they can overcome any problems that might arise. That sounds logical enough, and also appeals to our idealistic image of love. Unfortunately, research findings negate this notion—love, by itself, *doesn't* conquer all. The divorce rate in America remains at about 50%. Couples who divorce didn't start out loving each other any less than couples whose marriages succeed, and sometimes even continue to love each other despite a divorce. The difference is usually rooted in a triad of interpersonal skills: the abilities to maintain positive communication, minimize negativity, and resolve conflict effectively, which altogether are the cornerstones of successful intimate relationships. These communication skills are so significant that University of Washington professor John Gottman, a leading expert in relationship communication, can predict with greater than 90% accuracy whether a relationship will succeed or fail by simply observing the partners' communication with each other (Gottman and Levenson, 2000; Gottman and Silver, 2015). Later in this book, we will explore this research in more detail.

Another popular myth is that, in the working world, the most qualified person gets the job. We tend to think that "most qualified" means the person with the most experience in that type of work, or with the most skills in that area. Surprisingly, research shows that isn't true either. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) conducts annual surveys of employers to find out what factors they prize the most in hiring recent college graduates. Interpersonal skills, including communication, teamwork, and relating well to others, have topped the list for over a decade and are considered even more important than analytical skills, computer skills, or GPA (NACE, 2012).

These findings provide a strong rationale for developing good interpersonal skills. Do good human relations, then, result from acquiring good communication skills? On the surface, this may sound like a logical conclusion, and there are certainly many texts and courses built around development of communication skills. *101 Ways To Improve Your Communication Skills Instantly*, *50 One-Minute Tips to Better Communication*, and *A 30-Minute Guide to a Better Relationship* all promise better relationships for readers who follow the step-by-step guidelines. In reality, though, skills by themselves are not enough, because no two people, relationships, or situations are the same. And what really matters in effective relations is that we understand each other—and those requirements for "understanding" vary with different people, places, and situations. Please refer to the following video.

Communication Effectiveness

Communication expert Dr. Shelley Lane from the University of Texas explains why communication effectiveness can be so complex.

We don't live in a "one-size-fits-all" world, and indiscriminately applying communication rules or tools is only going to result in the occasional success.

> *Human relations are more accurately thought of as an art—an art in which development of good skills is one important component.*

The skills alone, though, are of little use without an understanding of the **context**. It is only when we consider the context, and apply our skills in a manner that fits, that we can begin to master the art of effective human relations.

1.2: What Is Context?

1.2 Explain how context affects our everyday lives

This issue of context is important, so let's look at a few examples, starting with context in skills that many people already have. For example, most people know how to cook. Granted, some are better than others, but most people know something about cooking. In fact, some people say, "If you can read, you can cook," implying that cooking is simply following the directions in a recipe; sometimes the recipe is even accompanied by a beautiful, mouth-watering photo, so how can you go wrong? Well, just as step-by-step guidelines to better relationships tend to be oversimplified, most of us have probably realized that making a recipe turn out like the photo is often far more complicated than it looks! And even after we've developed our art to the point where our dish looks as good as the picture, there is still more to consider.

For example, one dish by itself rarely constitutes a full meal, especially if you are having guests for a special occasion. The type of occasion, your culture, and your guests all might influence the combination of dishes you put together for your meal. For a Fourth of July party, you might grill some meat and veggies on the barbecue, put out some beans and a cold salad, and offer homemade ice cream with fresh berries for dessert. At Thanksgiving, many Americans roast a turkey, serve it with mashed potatoes and gravy, cranberry sauce, green beans, and a fruit salad, and perhaps bake an apple pie for dessert—that is, if they've mastered the challenge of making a good piecrust! And what if your guests were vegetarian, gluten-free, or had other dietary needs such as low fat or no sugar? Clearly, simply knowing how to cook is not enough.

And these holiday traditions are distinctly American. A person from another country may not be familiar with these traditions and could thus expect or prepare something very different, illustrating the importance of culture in context. To be successful, you need to consider all the contextual factors such as your guests' preferences, the occasion, your own strengths and weaknesses in cooking—and the culture you are in.

Curious about some of the ways different cultures celebrate the same holiday? Take a look at Table 1.1 for some examples of New Year's traditions around the world.

Table 1.1 New Year's Food and Traditions Around the World

Not all countries celebrate the same holidays, as they are often based on religious or historical tradition. One exception is the New Year, which almost all cultures celebrate (although the date varies with the national calendar). Here are some examples of typical New Year's fare and traditions around the world.

Country	New Year's Traditions
China	Long noodles symbolize long life; whole chicken (with head and feet intact) represents family unity; whole fish served last symbolizes abundance. It is also important to clean the house before the celebration, to sweep away bad luck from the previous year.
Poland	Pickled herring for good luck (its silver scales resemble money); pork is also good luck (the pig roots forward, and thus symbolizes progress); chicken is bad luck, as it could cause your good luck to "fly away."
Brazil	Lentils bring good luck (flat and round, they resemble coins); the color of your underwear tells what you wish for in the coming year (red asks for love, white for peace, and yellow for abundance).
Denmark	Cooked kale represents good fortune (green is the color of money, and kale's curly edges resemble folds in paper money). Danes also jump off chairs at midnight in order to leap into the new year.
Spain	Eating 12 grapes at midnight—one with each stroke of the clock—will bring good luck in the new year. Each grape symbolizes 1 month in the coming year; so, for example, if the third grape is sour, it may foretell "sour" events (such as crop-destroying weather) in March.
Scotland	"First footing"—people visit neighbors after the stroke of the New Year, and the first one to visit (the "first footer") should bring a gift. It is especially good luck if the first footer is dark-haired (possibly because blond visitors were historically Vikings, who defeated the Scots). Gifts typically include whisky, shortbread, and a black bun (a type of fruitcake), all indicators of abundance in the coming year.
Africa	Black-eyed peas, a historical staple in African food, are a symbol of blessings and kindness; in one African language the word for the pea, pronounced with different emphasis, is the same as the word for beauty.
Chile	Chileans who wish to travel in the coming year walk around the block with their suitcase right after midnight.

So, now you know that if a new friend brings you pickled herring or a black bun at your next New Year's Eve party, they wish you good luck! The larger point here is that, if we don't understand what someone else is doing—whether it be food-related or not—it's best to err on the generous side and give them the benefit of doubt. Their "odd" behavior could be quite normal in the context of their own culture.

WRITING PROMPT

Critical Thinking—When Did Context Confuse You?

Think of a situation you've been in where someone else's tradition was different from your own—it might be a family tradition surrounding a holiday, birthday, or other special day, or a certain way things were done in a school or work environment. Describe how that context was different from what you expected, and what you learned from the experience.

▶ `The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.`

Submit

1.2.1: How Context Applies to Human Relations

1.2.1 Explain the importance of "context" in human relations

Now that we understand the importance of context, let's consider how it applies to an important human relations activity: the art of listening. In this text you will learn several different styles of listening, including offering advice, giving support, asking questions, paraphrasing, and analyzing the situation. Each of these listening styles can be useful, depending on several factors. One factor to consider is the person you're listening to: Does she need advice, or analysis, or should you ask questions designed to help her sort through the situation on her own? Another important consideration is the situation. Perhaps you recently had a conversation with someone else who was in the same situation. Should you use the same listening style here? Not necessarily, because even if the situation is the same, the people involved are different. You must also consider yourself. What are your experiences with this person and with this situation? What do you know about your own strengths and weaknesses in listening? And how much time do you have? Clearly, there is much more to effective human relations than just acquiring the skills. This is where the "art" of human relations becomes important, as you work at becoming more proficient in knowing what skills to use with different people and in different situations.

1.2.2: Context Includes Culture

1.2.2 Explain why culture is an important element of context

One additional type of context essential to any modern study of human relations is the ever-increasing diversity of our culture and society. The *Encyclopedia of World Cultures* (Levinson, 1996) lists more than 1,500 different cultures around the world, and 36% of the U.S. population are

Here are just a few of the ways that people greet each other around the world. Do you recognize more than one? If so, that is one example of how the various cultures of our world are becoming more intertwined.

ethnic minorities (U.S. Census, 2014). And here's a fun fact: The English language now contains words from more than 240 different languages (O'Neill, 2006)—a powerful illustration of how intermingled the various cultures of the world are becoming.

Our cultural backgrounds play a significant role in the beliefs, expectations, and interpretations that color our interactions with others. As such, they can either help or hinder our communication—depending on how well we understand the cultural context. For example, many Western societies value assertiveness in communication; in other words, we tend to believe we should express ourselves directly. To do otherwise is to "beat around the bush," a tactic many people find annoying. But in Japanese and Native American cultures (just to name a few), this same directness is considered rude and offensive. In these groups it is more respectful to politely hint at your meaning, so the listener can make the connection on her own and thus "save face" by not having to have the message "spelled out" for her (Hall, 1959; Neuliep, 2011). Knowing these various cultural expectations would be another factor to consider in choosing the best listening style.

How can we possibly know all other cultures' expectations? That, of course, is a lifelong process—but we can start by learning about some broad patterns right now. Therefore, we will begin our study of human relations with a general overview of the meaning of culture, along with some common ways of differentiating various cultures. Then, as you progress throughout this book, each new topic will build on these cultural "basics" in order to expand your understanding of cultural similarities and differences in various areas. By doing so, you will emerge with a realistic, multicultural understanding of modern American society that will strengthen your overall human relations.

To start learning a little more about various world customs, complete the following shared writing, and then learn from your classmates by reading about what they discovered.

SHARED WRITING: CUSTOMS AROUND THE WORLD

Find an interesting custom from another country and describe it. You might learn about it by talking to someone from a different culture, or by reading about it online or in a book. It can be anything that is interesting to you, and different from your own cultural patterns—some examples could include the proper way to greet people, to eat, or to give gifts. Describe what you learned, include the details of the custom, and include your reference/source. Then, read your classmates' answers, and respond to at least two of them with your reactions.

A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post

0 characters | 140 minimum

1.3: Psychology, Science, and Human Relations

1.3 Explain the role of psychology in learning about human relations

Clearly, effective human relations goes far beyond simply mastering a set of communication skills. To effectively utilize our skills, we must also develop an understanding of the various contexts we will encounter. For that, we need **psychology**. Psychology takes into account both internal (personality) and external (social and cultural) factors that influence a person, so it can provide us with the foundation we need to become effective, or artful, in applying the communication skills we will develop.

We should also note the scientific nature of psychology. Contrary to the popular opinion that psychology relies on an intuitive understanding of people, psychology is more accurately considered a science. As such, the psychological principles we use as our basis for understanding people in this text will rely on scientific, or **empirical evidence**. Why is that important? Because the difference between empirical evidence and personal experience (known as **anecdotal evidence**) is vast! In a nutshell, anecdotal evidence is just one person's experience or observations. Empirical evidence, on the other hand, is the equivalent of the combined experiences or observations of many people. Furthermore, these combined experiences or observations have been collected and measured using scientific methods that help eliminate bias, which in turn gives us even more confidence in the findings. So, it follows that in our study of why people do what they do, we have a better chance of drawing accurate conclusions if we rely on empirical evidence, rather than on our own or another person's more limited (and possibly biased) experience.

Throughout the course of this text we will explore some basic principles of psychology that help us understand why people act, think, and feel in certain ways. As we study each concept, we will apply it to our own patterns of thoughts and behaviors—to enhance our self-awareness—as well as to patterns of our friends, family members, and the general population. Then, armed with this new understanding, we will learn a broad array of communication skills, and actively explore how application of these skills will vary depending on the person with whom we are interacting and the specific situation. By the time you complete this text, you will see a significant improvement in your relations with others, both personally and professionally.

For our purposes, then, we will define **human relations** as the ability to interact effectively with diverse others in a variety of situations. Developing this ability is a *process*: Just as artists work throughout their lives to improve their art, we must commit to continually working to improve our art, the art of human relations. Actually, the process began informally many years ago, when as a young child you began observing and interacting with your environment. As you grew into adulthood, you continued to hone your abilities based on your experiences and your instincts. That background will serve you well as you now begin your formal study of human relations, where you will uncover new knowledge to add to your experience, so you can further improve your interpersonal effectiveness. To get started, complete Activity 1.1, which will help you identify some patterns in your current human relations. Keep the activity when you have finished (or when your professor has returned it to you), so you can refer back to it at the end of the term and see how you've improved!

Activity 1.1

Assessing Your Current Human Relations Abilities

Click here to download the activity below and add your responses directly into the PDF.

Instructions: *This exercise will help you evaluate your current strengths in your relations with others, along with some possible areas for improvement. For each of the following questions, first rate yourself on a scale of 1–5 (1 = lowest and 5 = highest), then provide the additional information. Be as specific as possible.*

1. Overall, how well would you say you *understand* people? (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5
   The person(s) I understand the most is/are ___(List names/relationships)____
   I least understand ___(Name of person)____, and/or people when ___(Particular situation, setting, or characteristic)____.
2. Overall, how well would you say you *get along with* people? (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5
   The person(s) I get along with best is/are ___(Name of person/s)_____.
   I get along the worst with ___(Name of person)____, and/or people when ___(Particular situation, setting, or characteristic)____.
3. Overall, how *effectively do you communicate* with people? (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5
   The person(s) I communicate with best is/are ___(Name of person/s)_____.
   I communicate the least effectively with ___(Name of person)____, and/or people when ___(Particular situation, setting, or characteristic)____.
4. Overall, how *effectively do you resolve conflict* with people? (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5
   The person(s) I resolve conflict with best is/are ___(Name of person/s)_____.
   I have the most problems resolving conflict with ___(Name of person)____, and/or people when ___(Particular situation, setting, or characteristic)____.
5. How often do you *feel understood by others?* (1 = never, 5 = always) (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5
   The person(s) who best understand(s) me is/are ___(Name of person/s)_____.
   I feel the least understood by ___(Name of person)____, and/or people when ___(Particular situation, setting, or characteristic)____.
6. Finally, think about your general interpersonal skills. What are your best qualities (which enhance your human relations)?
   What are your weakest areas (which interfere with your human relations)?
7. a. Now, get a "second opinion" on question 6: Ask a person who knows you well what he or she thinks

are your strongest and weakest areas in your relations with others.

b. Compare your answers to question 6 to what you learned in question 7a. What thoughts do you have about the similarities and differences?

8. Review the answers you gave to each of the questions in this exercise, and reflect on them. Do you notice any patterns that may lend insight into your human relations?

a. Overall, what is working well for you, and with whom or in what settings?

b. What are your biggest challenges in terms of personal characteristics, people, or situations?

1.4: Culture: A Unifying Theme

1.4 Explain how generational differences influence values of that generation

We hear more and more about **culture** these days, but what exactly does it mean? Many people think of nationality when they hear someone refer to culture: For example, you might think of Americans, Japanese, Egyptians, or Irish. Ethnicity is another term that people equate with culture, especially in describing cultural differences in our own country: We might refer to African Americans, Native Americans, or Latinos, just to name a few. But did you know that age is also a type of culture? We hear about the "Greatest Generation," the "Baby Boomers," "Gen X," and "the Millennials," and indeed, research has found differences among these groups in terms of their values and goals. See Table 1.2 for some examples.

Thus, generational differences can modify cultural values. Similarly, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, educational level, and even things such as interests and hobbies can influence our values and belief systems. We'll dig deeper into some examples shortly, but first, let's start with a definition of culture.

1.4.1: What Is Culture?

1.4.1 Summarize how cultural values can influence the expectations, beliefs, and behaviors of individuals

Many different definitions of culture have been proposed—in fact, if you pick up five different textbooks, you'll probably find five different definitions of culture. Don't let this confuse you, though, because the variety of definitions simply reflects the complexity of the nature of culture as well as the different disciplines that have studied it—anthropology, sociology, history, political science, and of course psychology. Fortunately, many of the definitions can be pulled together into a single idea, which we will use as our definition of culture: A **culture** is a set of values, shared by a group of people, which shape and influence the norms, attitudes, beliefs, expectations, perceptions, and behaviors of the group members. Please refer to the following video.

With this overview of culture as our guide, let's examine the concepts of culture and values more closely.

Earlier, we mentioned nationality as an example of culture, and indeed it can be. Many cross-cultural studies have examined behaviors and values using nationality as the basis for comparison. Our personal experiences support this notion as well. If you visit a foreign country, you will find that residents of that country do some things differently than the residents of your own country.

Table 1.2 Age-Related Cultural Differences in the U.S.

Generation	Birth Years	Life-Defining Events	Characteristics and Values	Goals
The Greatest Generation	1925–1945	The Great Depression, WWII	Loyalty, sacrifice, honor, duty, respect for authority, hard work	To build a legacy, to give back
The Baby Boomers	1946–1964	Civil rights movement, Vietnam War, Cold War, women's movement	Equality, personal growth, ambition, youthfulness, collaboration, optimism, success	To make a difference
Gen X	1965–1980	AIDS, personal computers, corporate downsizing, Watergate, increased divorce rate	Independence, self-reliance, flexibility, cultural diversity, work-life balance	To take care of themselves and remain independent
Gen Y (the Millennials)	1981–2004	9/11, reality TV, digital media, school shootings, the Internet	Confidence, optimism, diversity, technology, open-mindedness	Self-expression; taking care of their family

Source: Based on: Sutin and others, 2013; Trzesniewski and Donnellan, 2010; Twenge and others, 2012.

Introduction to Culture

For a brief introduction to culture and how it develops, watch this short video.

Example

What would you do, for example, if you were travelling in a foreign country and your dinner host proudly served you crispy sautéed crickets in a spicy garlic sauce?

Would you eat them? Many North Americans may wrinkle our noses in disgust at the thought of eating bugs, but did you know they have been enjoyed as a valuable source of protein for thousands of years and all over the world? It was only when Western cultures began to grow crops and raise livestock in larger numbers that insects became the enemy, and thus something to be destroyed (Guynup and Ruggia, 2004). The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, in the fourth century B.C., wrote a detailed description of the best time to harvest cicadas for food. Paiute Indians in 18th-century Nevada gathered bushels of crickets to burn and use for protein in flour. Many African cultures continue to enjoy winged termites—roasted, fried, or added to bread or porridge. Savory grubs, fire-roasted tarantulas, and fly larvae become tasty treats from Australia to Latin America to Asia. So why do we Americans turn away from them?

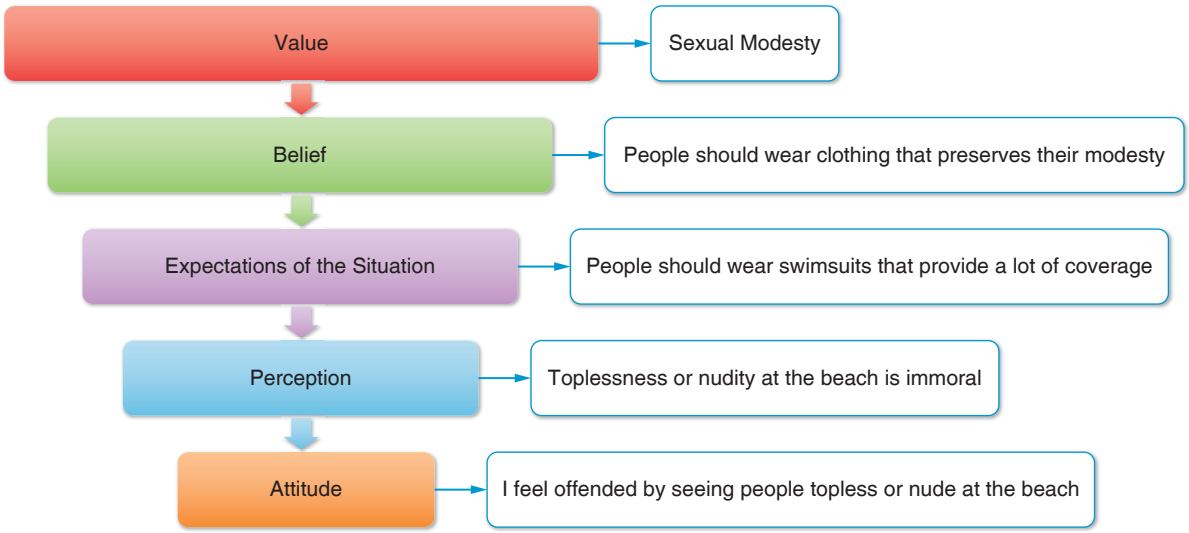
What Would You Do?

Would you consider this cricket to be a tasty treat? People in many cultures enjoy eating insects—in fact, there is even a word for it. It's called entomophagy.

Just as people from many other world cultures grow up eating insects and thus naturally thinking of them as a food source, we in Northern America grow up avoiding bugs—they bite us, sting us, and are generally seen as dirty and a nuisance (D'Costa, 2013). These two very different attitudes towards insects, then, are rooted in generations of history and tradition. Thus, they powerfully shape our own habits and values, to the point that we don't even question them—we just know what's "right," and in our minds, eating bugs is just "wrong!" We do, however, think it's fine to eat shrimp and lobster—which, by the way, are considered "dirty" and unacceptable by many insect-eating societies. Understanding how the diverse eating preferences among different cultures derive from a long, enduring history helps us accept that the beliefs and practices of other social groups are as natural to them as ours are to us. It's food for thought (pun intended).

Figure 1.1 Values Are the Foundation of Culture

Now, try applying this concept to a different example. Consider sexual modesty as an example of a value, and reflect on how that value would influence people's beliefs, expectations, perceptions, and attitudes on a warm day at the beach.



Although the question of whether or not to eat insects may not be the most significant example of cultural diversity, it does serve to illustrate how cultural traditions and history shape values, which in turn influence a group's norms, beliefs, attitudes, expectations, perceptions, and behaviors. If we *value* insects as a food source, then our *belief* would be that people should eat them, which in turn would affect our *expectations* of what we'd find on the menu. Our *attitude* would be similarly influenced, in that our mouths might water at the thought of spicy garlic crickets and we would *perceive* that behavior as normal and "right." And in different cultures we will find different value sets, which in turn drive different norms, beliefs, attitudes, expectations, perceptions, and behaviors. Understanding these differences, then, begins with identifying and understanding the history and values that form the foundation of the behavior pattern. Figure 1.1 shows a flowchart representing this model, and gives you an opportunity to test your understanding. After interacting with the figure, complete Activity 1.2 to identify your own values.

Activity 1.2

Values Identification Exercise

Click here to download the activity below and add your responses directly into the PDF.

Instructions: *This activity will help you prioritize your values. Part 1 lists some* **terminal values,** *or values that refer to overall life goals. In part 2 you will find* **instrumental values,** *or values that refer to types of behavior that we strive for or prefer. For each list, choose the values that are most important and least important to you and rank them from 1 to 18. Your number 1 should be your highest value on that list, number 2 your second highest, and so forth, down to number 18, which is your least important value.*

Part 1: Terminal Values

_____ A Comfortable Life (a prosperous life)
_____ An Exciting Life (a stimulating, active life)
_____ A Sense of Accomplishment (making a lasting contribution)
_____ A World at Peace (free of war and conflict)
_____ A World of Beauty (beauty of nature and the arts)
_____ Equality (equal opportunity for all)
_____ Family Security (taking care of loved ones)
_____ Freedom (independence, free choice)
_____ Happiness (contentedness)
_____ Inner Harmony (freedom from inner conflict)
_____ Mature Love (sexual and spiritual intimacy)
_____ National Security (protection from attack)
_____ Pleasure (an enjoyable, leisurely life)
_____ Salvation (saved, eternal life)
_____ Self-Respect (self-esteem)
_____ Social Recognition (respect, admiration)
_____ True Friendship (close companionship)
_____ Wisdom (a mature understanding of life)

Part 2: Instrumental Values

_____ Ambitious (hard-working, aspiring)
_____ Broadminded (open-minded)
_____ Capable (competent, effective)
_____ Cheerful (lighthearted, joyful)
_____ Clean (neat, tidy)
_____ Courageous (standing up for your beliefs)