

Interpersonal Skills for Life and Work for College Students on the Autism Spectrum

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For College Students on the Autism Spectrum

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Accessibility Statement

Accessibility Review by Lara Tompkins, College of DuPage.

Review:

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I. Chapter 1: Introductions

Chapter 1: Introductions



Lets Begin!!

The first class session can be a stressful one. People are coming in, the instructor is setting their things up, and you don't know what to expect from anyone or anything. A class like this can be especially stressful—you already know everyone in the course has something in common with you, but to what degree? And, will you all be treated the same or differently? One of the most common concerns I hear from students who take this class is that everyone in it might be lower functioning than themselves and it makes you feel like the teacher will never understand what you're capable of, or that the teacher will be putting all their energy in addressing behavioral issues for those students who are lower and not a lot of learning won't occur in class. This is understandable.

Another common complaint I will hear from students in this class is the feeling that the course isn't needed very much at all and it's really the parents making the student take the course. Perhaps you've heard the term, "neurotypical". If you haven't, here's a definition:

Θ **neu-ro-typ-i-cal** /,n(y)oʊrō'tipikəl/

adjective

adjective: **neurotypical**; adjective: **neuro-typical**

1. not displaying or characterized by autistic or other neurologically atypical patterns of thought or behavior.

“neurotypical individuals often assume that their experience of the world is either the only one or the only correct one”

Basically, the idea is that people on the autism spectrum are suggesting that perhaps the way that they perceive the world is the proper way to see things, and its people *who are not on the spectrum* are the ones that are misconceiving things. Who knows, perhaps they're correct! I mean, if you look at American culture from a distance there are tons and tons of social rules, non-verbal expectations, and confusing phrases in our language that makes no sense at all! “I have all my ducks in a row?”, “he threw her under the bus?”, “I quit cold turkey?”, etc. There are tons. How is anyone supposed to expect all these statements to make any kind of logical sense!

The final student I often see in class is one that makes me especially sad—this is the one that really registered for the course because they are mainly hoping to make friends because they do feel lonely at times and are tired of just playing video games or watching YouTube videos by themselves alone all the time. This is especially sad to me because I think college should be a special time in students' lives where they often make friendships that can last a lifetime—certainly that has been my own personal experience. I want college to be some of the best years of a persons life, not the worst!

On the positive side, students who are like this should have no fear as having taught this course for six years now, I have indeed found students do tend to form unique bonds and develop friendships that perhaps they were unable to form in other courses. I once had a student tell me, “I've found my tribe”. I absolutely loved that. And indeed, you may find that there are others in your class who look at the world and who have the exact same hobbies as you—just like members in a tribe—and what a wonderful experience that is! So, lets get started. Lets have our first Exercise!

Communication Exercise: Basic Introductions

After having everyone in class forming a circle, each student should answer the following questions:

- What are you studying here at the college?
- What do you like to do for
- What's one unique thing about yourself?
- Why did you sign up for the class (be honest)?

Try to answer as honestly as you can. After everyone has answered the question, as a larger group answer the following questions:

- What are some of the things everyone had in common?
- What were some of the unique things about individuals you found especially interesting?
- What are your impressions of everyone now compared to what you thought about them before the class started

today? What is your impression of the instructor (s) after this first exercise?

Ground Rules

The next activity we will do in class today is setting of ground rules. These are things that are universally agreed upon by everyone in the class to adhere to in an effort to promote an environment that is safe and welcoming. The ground rules are entirely up to everyone in the class, but some that have come up in the class include:

- Not sharing personal things about others in class
- Staying off phones when class is happening (during breaks and before/after class is okay)
- Not touching others things without their permission
- Not touching other people (even innocently) without their permission
- Not swearing at other people directly in class and only swearing if its very important to the story (keep it to a minimum)
- Use a peace hand signal if someone is talking too much or monopolizing the conversation
- Not talking when other people are talking and not interrupting when someone else is talking
- Eat only if you have to, but avoid loud foods. Drinks are okay if not noisy.
- Music and videos okay to watch on breaks (headphones only) or before/after class
- Always try to be respectful of others
- If you need to leave classroom, you don't have to tell the teacher, but do it quietly and not make a scene
- Respect the teachers when they are lecturing or talking
- No sleeping in class
- No showing up late to class or leaving early from class unless absolutely necessary

After everyone has had a chance to share their ground rule expectations and everyone is in agreement, the instructor should write these down and make copies for the next class as a reminder of the things everyone agreed to follow.

Syllabus

Lets take some time now and look at the syllabus for this course. It is housed in the Appendix of this book. Please take some time to look at it, and go over it with your instructor. This will likely take at least 30 minutes in class to do, so please be patient!

Communication Exercise: Human Bingo

Now that we've started to get to know each other a little, lets focus on better understanding each other better. The second activity we will do is called, "Human Bingo". For this, you will each start with a bingo card which is also housed in the Appendix as well as pasted here:

Someone who loves karaoke	Someone who comes from a large family	Someone who doesn't like to dance	Someone who enjoys coffee	Someone who enjoys sports
Someone who Plays an instrument	Someone who likes to go shopping	Someone who tells a good joke	Someone who is very prompt	Someone who is very disorganized
Someone who works part-time	Someone who moved here recently	Someone who likes sushi	Someone who likes chocolate	Someone who is wearing blue
Someone who knows more than one language	Someone who is spontaneous	Someone who considers themselves shy	Someone who likes video games	Someone who is an only child
Someone who is undecided on major	Someone who has traveled abroad	Someone who is taking their first class in college	Someone who loves the city	Someone who loves science fiction

Find one individual person in your class who fits into each of the descriptions and have them sign their first name below the statement. You can only have one person sign each square! Repeat this exercise until you reach a Bingo. After you have finished, discuss in the group:

- What was that activity like?
- Did you find it hard to go up to people you didn't know? Easy?
- Which squares were the hardest to fill? The easiest?

At this point the class is likely almost over, so its time to review some of the most essential expectations of the course. As a reminder, each week, each student will receive a email question from the instructor they are expected to answer-just reply to the instructors question and answer within 2 to 3 sentences the answer. In addition, you will also have a worksheet to complete week to week as well. This worksheet is housed in the Appendix B: Worksheet Assignments and is due at the start of class. For this weeks Worksheet, you should fill it out with someone who knows you well-a parent, best friend, brother/sister, person you're in a relationship, etc. Talk to anyone who knows you well. Both of these assignments will be due at the start of class next week.

Your email question which you should apply to is pasted below. See you next week!

Email Question #1:

I'd like to know what social skill you would especially like to work on this semester that you think you could use some work on. For example, previous skills students have asked to work on include: reading non-verbal skills better, learning to open up more and not keeping to myself, making more friends, not dominating conversations, managing anxiety better, knowing how to listen more, expressing feelings better, understanding romantic relationships better, and interviewing better.

So, what skill would be most important to you for working on this semester? And why? Please write a few sentences explaining your thoughts by replying to this email.

Worksheet #1:

Part I Instructions: the goal of this course is to make it as useful and effective to you as possible. To help us in doing so, please rate on a scale from 1 to 10 (with 1 being low, 10 high) how important it is to you we cover the following topics throughout the semester. Write your numbers next to each statement.

- Developing friendships
- Maintaining relationships
- Managing anxiety
- Managing depression
- Confrontation skills
- Recognizing emotions
- Understanding romantic relationships
- Interviewing skills
- Improving self-disclosure skills
- Expressing feelings and emotions
- Listening skills
- Responding with understanding and empathy better
- Understanding deeper meaning of conversations
- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____

Part II instructions: Now, speak with someone who knows you very well. This could be a parent, best friend, sibling, whoever, and ask them their thoughts on the following questions:

1. I think a real strength of your personality and communication is what:
2. I think one area of your personality and communication you could improve upon is:
3. Another area you could also improve upon is:
4. Some ideas on how we could work together in improving these skills might be to:

TO THE STUDENT ONLY: In addition to the all things we talked about in this assignment, if there was but one goal or social skill you would seek to improve upon above all others, what would it be?

2. Chapter 2: Setting Initial Goals

Chapter 2: Setting Initial Goals

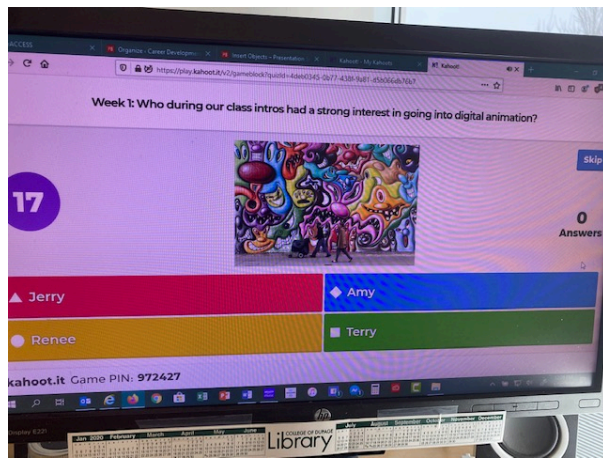


Communication Exercise Lets play Kahoot!

Did You Pay Attention?

Before getting things rolling for this weeks work, you may be reminded that 20% of this courses grade is determined by Class Participation. Specifically, this is determined by 10% of the grade assigned at midterms in the semester, and then the final 10% at the end of the semester. This will be explored in more detail in the future. For now though, remember this is an important element of your grade.

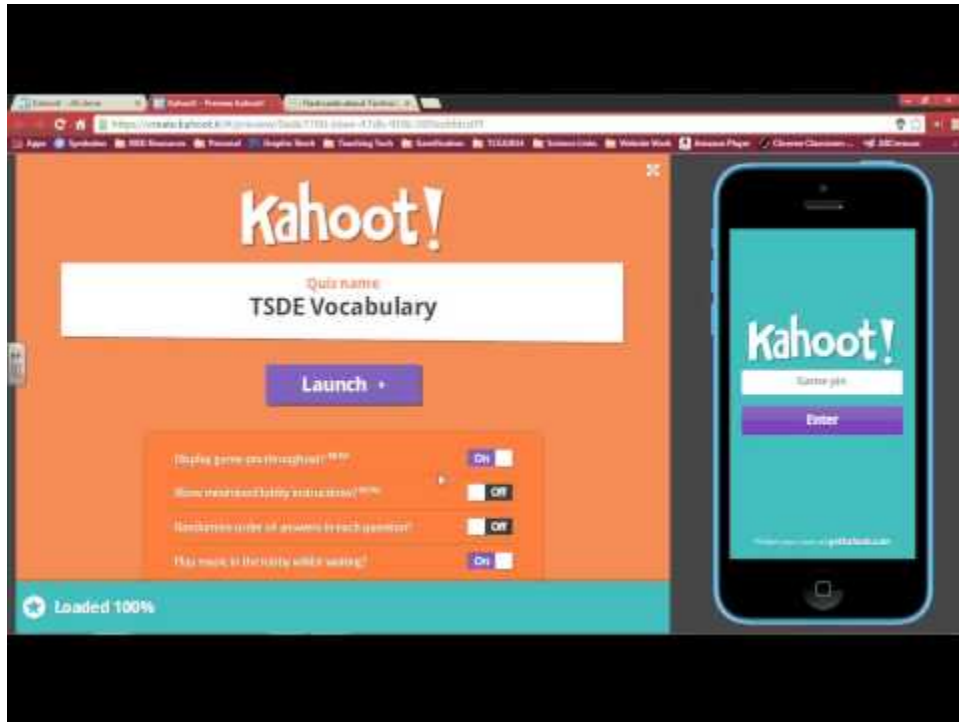
To that, the class will be engaging in an activity to see how well classmates paid attention during introductions last week. An important element of developing interpersonal relationships is not only speaking to others, it is also listening to others and really paying attention to learn as much about that person to help enhance the relationship. In seeing how well you paid attention from last week, we will play a Kahoot! game with questions generated from students comments last week. If you've never used Kahoot!, it is a free online gaming software where students can take quizzes like the TV show Jeopardy using their smartphones as buzzers. Students should pair up (hopefully there are enough smart phones for one buzzer per pair by doing this), and answer the questions. A couple of screenshots of Kahoot are below to give you an idea what it looks like:



Some example questions might include:

- Who in class said they just moved here from out of state?
- Who in class said they love to play Legend of Zelda?
- Who in class said their parents made them take this class but are willing to “give it a shot”?
- Who in class said they love painting animals?
- Who in class quoted lines from *The Avengers* as part of their introduction?
- etc.

A helpful tutorial video can be found here:



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://cod.pressbooks.pub/interpersonalskillsautism/?p=25>

Review of Homework/Setting Goals

For the first part of class we want to discuss goals. Students should have completed through their previous homework assignment individual goals they each had in the course. Setting social goals can be a complicated thing: certainly there is some risk involved because you're sharing something about yourself you'd like to improve but you also don't want to set goals that are easy socially so that you're overly bored in class. I always suggest to students that they talk to someone how knows them well to assist in developing individual goals. Some common ones I often find that emerge in class include:

- Reading non-verbal messages better
- Learning to open up more and not keeping everything to myself
- Developing better friendships
- Having less anxiety when talking to others
- Learning how to try to get a boyfriend/girlfriend
- Bragging less and listening more
- Having a more confident tone of voice
- Learn how to jump into conversations more easily
- Understand social media better and not taking it too seriously

- Learn to talk about things other than the topics I always talk about
- Being less depressed
- Reading body-language better and non-verbal's
- Learn how to put things in my own words instead of just repeating things
- Have better job interviewing skills
- Learn how to express my feelings better
- Spend less time playing video games and watching You Tube and more actually with people

There are many others out there; this is just a sample

Communication Exercise: Highs and Lows of the Week

Each week we will spend roughly 30 minutes of the class checking with each other sharing highs and lows of the week. The idea of this activity to get to know each other better, support one another, and then address interpersonal challenges as they emerge. Check-ins can be a great way to refine communication skills given the wide variety of topics that come up. Each person will individually share their highs and lows for the week (including the instructors or anyone else who is in the room) to establish the principal we are all here for each other and equals when it comes needing to develop our interpersonal skills.

Email Question #2:

Hey everyone, great class today!

So we had our first start with a new format in class today where we did high/lows for the week. This is something we will continue to do for many weeks during the term. How did the activity feel to you? What did you think? Also, what are your thoughts overall on the course thus far? What you expected? Not?

Write 2-3 sentences answering all the questions the instructor posed.

Worksheet #2:

Helping One Another with Each Other's Goals: Part I

Part I:

Below are the specific skills each of your classmates shared as things they wish to work on this semester. Because we are in this together, let's take an inventory of which skills we are the best at, and which we could use some work on. For each one of these, give yourself a score from 1 to 10 (1 being low, 10 being high), how well or not so well you are in each skill.

- _____ Expressing myself better so others can better understand my feelings
- _____ Responding better to others comments
- _____ Liking myself and the sound of my voice better
- _____ Working on conversational skills
- _____ Knowing when to change the subject or see if a person is interested in what I'm talking about
- _____ Managing anxiety better
- _____ Opening up to others more and not keeping everything in myself
- _____ Improve my social skills
- _____ Manage my anger better
- _____ Learning how to get along with others better
- _____ Make more friends
- _____ Improve job interview skills
- _____ Knowing better when I am annoying people so they wont want to talk to me
- _____ Being better at reading the atmosphere better so I don't look inconsiderate

If you had to pick one skill of the above you think you are the BEST at, which would it be and why?

If you had to pick one skill you are the less than best at, which would it be and why?

Part II:

Now, go to someone who knows you well and ask THEM to rate you on these skills in a similar fashion. As a reminder, they are:

- _____ Expressing myself better so others can better understand my feelings
- _____ Responding better to others comments
- _____ Liking myself and the sound of my voice better
- _____ Working on conversational skills
- _____ Knowing when to change the subject or see if a person is interested in what I'm talking about
- _____ Managing anxiety better
- _____ Opening up to others more and not keeping everything in myself
- _____ Improve my social skills
- _____ Manage my anger better
- _____ Learning how to get along with others better
- _____ Make more friends
- _____ Improve job interview skills
- _____ Knowing better when I am annoying people so they wont want to talk to me
- _____ Being better at reading the atmosphere better so I don't look inconsiderate

Take a look at their list, did the rate the same things as you? Or were they different?

Speak to the person you did this activity with, ask them if there are any ways you can work together throughout the term on the skills you identified. Share your mutual plan below.

3. Chapter 3: The Highs and Lows of Anxiety

Chapter 3: The Highs and Lows of Anxiety



Aaargh!

Having taught this class now for eight years whenever I ask students what the single-most biggest challenge they experience, the answer is almost always anxiety. It's interesting to note that whether it is a student section just for those on the spectrum or for the larger population, I still always get the same answer. Indeed, being a college student in the 2020's seems like a much more stressful thing than I ever had to deal with back in my day. There are so many complexities and ways we can be vulnerable in this modern world—social media, identity theft, privacy invasion, plus, all the challenges I did face growing up—passing your classes, working part-time, making friends, and developing a sense of self. The entire thing is incredibly challenging.

Not all anxiety is bad, in fact, to a degree, it can be good. Anxiety is often what motivates us to keep studying that extra critical hour that dramatically improves our test performance, or keeps us out of trouble when we're driving and the roads are slippery. Anxiety is an internal warning that directs us towards safety at times. But how do we know what anxiety is rational or good versus irrational and counterproductive? And, how do we sort out what is real and what isn't?

A good starting point as we look for an answer to these questions is to develop an awareness of what our “weak spots” are. A term we use to refer to this concept is called an “Achilles heel”. If you remember your childhood mythology, Achilles was a mortal hero of the Trojan war in Greece and the son of the king Peleus and sea nymph Thetis. His mother, Thetis, wanted her son to grow up to be an ideal warrior who could never be harmed in wartime by any spear or sword. To protect Achilles, she dipped his son in the river Styx which created an invisible armor making it impossible for any weapon to harm him. Every part of Achilles's body was protected, with the exception of his right heel, which his mother held his son from as she dipped him in the river Styx. That spot on Achilles heel thus became his weak point, and hence the term “Achilles heel” was born.

So what is your Achilles heel when it comes to anxiety? What are the things that make you the most anxious and why does it trigger you? Every person is different—for some it's examinations in class; for some it's walking through large crowds in places you're unfamiliar with; for me personally it's driving when it's snowing outside. We all have our triggers and vulnerabilities, and we're all human by having them. But by better recognizing these things we can start to do something about it.

Communication Exercise: Exploring Triggers

One of the things that helps us face our anxiety with a new perspective is to openly declare how it impacts yourself and then speak with others about theirs as well. Group exercises like this make us feel less alone, but also may at times add an element of humor to the discussion, which makes us feel a little more confident in the future. For this exercise, each student should take a sheet of paper and write down one thing that really makes them feel anxious or triggers them. Everyone should then put these sheets of paper in a bowl, and then as a group try to guess which trigger goes to who. After the owner of each item is revealed, that person should talk a little more about why it makes them feel the way they do and everyone in the group should help them think of new ways to possibly face that anxiety producing incident.

“Like walking on top of a pool of custard....”

I recently watched a TED talk from Neil Hughes, a professional speaker and comedian, that I really liked. A link to it is below. His analogy of anxiety being like walking on custard really struck with me. Take a look at it:



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: <https://cod.pressbooks.pub/interpersonalskillsautism/?p=45>

Avoiding Catastrophizing

What did you think? He makes a lot of good points. For instance, the realization that when it comes to our anxiety, we can take Newtonian or non-Newtonian response in how we deal with it. I can certainly think of times in my life when I faced my anxieties and the result was like punching water, and others when it was like punching custard! Start to think about your life and how you face things—does this video give you any perspective?

The speaker makes another point I really like when talking about his anxiety, and that's how we can blow things up to a much higher level than is really necessary. He talks about how he first notices his knee hurts after bumping it, and within a few minutes in his mind he is convinced the knee is now infected with cancer and will need to be amputated. That over-amplification of a small aspect into something huge we call catastrophizing. We all do it at times. I remember when I had my interview for the job I presently hold (which I've had for over 16 years now), when I entered the room for my interview, I tripped on a pen that was left on the ground. I didn't fall down, but I did lose my balance for a second and had to grab the wall. Afterwards I was fine, but after that trip, here was the process that went through my mind..

- I tripped on this pen.....
- The interview committee will think I'm clumsy.....
- If they think I'm clumsy, they will see me as disorganized....
- If they see me as disorganized, they will think I'm not able to do my job....
- If they don't think I do my job, I'll never be offered the position....
- Since I won't be offered the position, I should give up right now and just go home....
- Once I get home, I will realize I'm incapable of getting a job....
- Since I'm incapable of getting a job, I'm going to be kicked out of my home....
- If I'm kicked out of my home I will be homeless and alone....
- If I'm homeless and alone, I will have the most horrible life any human being has ever had or ever will have...
- &, etc.

And so on. As I type this, I kind of laugh because obviously the tripping meant nothing to the committee and I still got the job, but I distinctly remember having this exact thought process for days after my interview. When I type it up like this, it's kind of humorous how we can blow things up though!

Communication Exercise: Your Turn

Form small groups of 4 or 5 students and engage in the same exercise. Someone come up with a common mistake we all can make, and then blow things up bullet by bullet like above to an absolute worst case scenario. Blow it up to the most extreme worst scenario you can think of—maybe ultimately the universe will collapse in on itself! Take it to a ridiculous extreme. Doing so can be fun, but also helps us put things into perspective.

Email Question #3:

So today in class we talked about anxiety and trying to do something different in managing our anxieties than we normally do in the hopes of having a better response. What is something that stresses you out or causes you anxiety? What do you usually do about it, and what could you try to do differently instead?

See you next week!

Worksheet #3

Positive and Negative Coping Mechanisms for Anxiety

Instructions: Answer each of the questions below. Then, show it someone who knows you well. Ask them to add any others you may have missed. Then, answer the questions on the back.

- **Positive Coping Mechanisms for my Anxiety:**
- **Negative Coping Mechanisms for my Anxiety:**

Now show your answers to someone who knows you well and ask them to add:

- **“I would also add for you (or not) for positive coping”**
- **“I would also add for you (or not) for negative coping”**

Now, Answer These Questions:

- 1) Did your responses match the person you worked with? Were there any that surprised you or you hadn't thought of?
- 2) How would you focus on increasing your positive coping styles and decrease those negative ones?
- 3) The American Psychological Association estimates roughly 18% of the US population struggles with anxiety. Why do you think this is?

4. Chapter 4: Developing and Maintaining Relationships

Chapter 4: Developing and Maintaining Relationships



“I’d like to learn to make more friends....”

This is probably one of the most commonly heard statements I get from students who take my Interpersonal Communications class. Its funny, because the students who are in my class often say this, but I don’t think they realize there are times I feel the exact same way. For whatever reason—I theorize social media—when it comes to in-person, genuine human connections, we seem more apart from one another than ever before. My personal theory is we delude ourselves in thinking we are connected because we have 100+ Facebook or Instagram friends and in our heads think this shows we are interconnected. That is all well and good, but we all experience times when we’d like to talk face to face with someone about the hard day we’re having; or we have times we’d love to share the joy of playing a video or board game with another in person to hear their laughs of joy when they win or lose. This type of interaction seems to be decreasing more and more....

So, if you are a student thinking you’d like to make more friends, know you’re not alone. Instead, you’re in the growing majority, sadly. So what to do about it? A good starting point can come through club offerings on your campus. At the school I work at alone, there are 50+ clubs and organizations. All kinds of things a student can choose from—video game club, science fiction club, religious-based clubs, politically based clubs, environmental change clubs, volunteerism clubs, there are many! A nice thing about attending a club on campus is you already know you and the other attendees share at least on thing in common.

What if you attend a smaller school where there are fewer club offerings? Or, perhaps there is a club that interests you, but meets at a time you already have another commitment? Another great way to meet people in the larger community with a common interest is through volunteer work. There are so very many great organizations that need help—humane societies for abandoned pets, food pantries for people in need, disability support organizations for support and socialization like Special Olympics, religiously affiliated groups for community service and prayer, mentoring programs like Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America. Again, countless ways to get involved with others who share your similar interests on a particular topic.

Communication Exercise: Connections

So this exercise will be a two step process. The first is gather a list of all the campus clubs that meet on campus, and then another list of places people can volunteer with in your area. If you have access to a computer lab, take your class as a group and do this exploration together. If you a computer lab is not accessible, just have your instructor gather these two lists ahead of time and make copies. After reviewing all the club and volunteer opportunities, have each person in class identify two different club and volunteer organizations that would be of interest and in a group share your ideas for each person why you'd choose those and what sounds interesting about them. If more than one person in the class identifies a similar club or volunteer organization, consider attending a meeting or volunteer site together!

“Its hard for people to resist light during dark times...”

If you go on You Tube and search for the term “ways to make friends”, there are tons of videos out there. A lot of them though are geared towards adults, or are veiled ways to get you to purchase somebodies self-help book. One that I really did like though with simple and practical tips I found through Pysch2Go called, “Making friends when you're socially awkward”. Don't worry if you do not believe you are socially awkward, the lessons in this short video are very universal.



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Conversation Skills 101

An analogy I like to use for good conversations is ideally it should be like a tennis match. Person A asks a question person B finds interesting and then Person B answers back. Then Person B asks a question person A finds interesting and then Person A answers back. And so on. Ideally the length of questions, and responses, are of the same rough duration of time and hold both participants attention. Imagine the last time you had a conversation with someone, was it like a tennis match with similar length statements? Did you talk more than the other person? Less? Did you ask the same amount of questions that they did? More? Thinking about your conversations in this manner helps us there is almost a mathematical element to interpersonal communications we perhaps are missing.

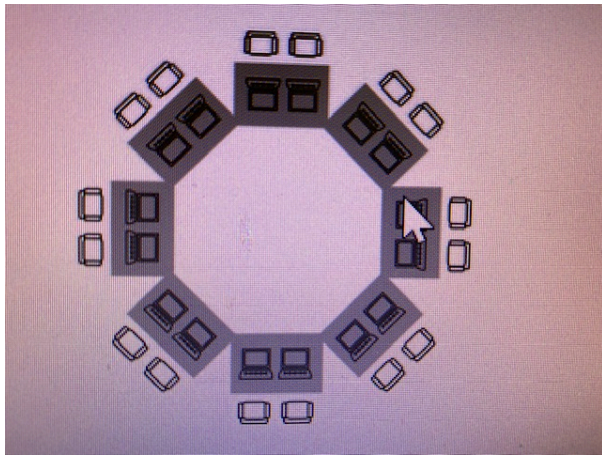
So how do you generate questions that the other person might be interested in answering? If you know the person well, this is certainly easier. Hopefully you've paid attention to past conversations you've had with the person and taken note of the things they like to talk about. Did they talk about hobbies they have? Things they like to do? Things they enjoy talking about? Having this information can make it easy to craft questions connected to what that person finds personally interesting.

For strangers, this is a more difficult task. How do you think of things to ask when you know almost nothing about the person? Looking for clues based on the way the person is dressed or what they are carrying can sometimes help. If they have a t-shirt mentioning a movie or musician, ask them why they chose to wear it. If they're carrying an object that is a little unusual like a book or a computer, ask them what they have that item for. If none of that is present, aim for neutral general topics that are not polarizing but shared experiences—the weather, the time of year if a holiday is close by, the plans for the upcoming weekend or if they've seen any interesting movies or television shows for example. Broad

questions where there can be many different types of answers are good ideas. For new relationships, it's generally good to avoid topics which can be more polarizing such as politics, religion, or dating practices. These can be great topics when you know someone a little better, but bad choices for initial conversation starters.

Communication Exercise: Conversation Practice

For this exercise, arrange the chairs in your classroom that everyone is sitting in to form two circles, one smaller and one larger, kinda like this (don't worry if the circles aren't perfect). The idea is to have each person in class face another person. If there is an odd number of participants in class, have one person face an empty chair.



Now, using the list of questions below, have each pair of people have a conversation using that question as a central focus of the conversation. The person on the inside of the circle answers the question first, while the outside circle member then asks a follow up question connected to the inside person's response. Then, the outside circle member answers the question, and the inside person asks a follow up question connected to their response. After everyone has had a chance to respond, have each person in the outside circle get up from their chairs and move one chair over in the a clockwise direction (the inside circle stays put). Then, use the same format for the next question. Questions you should use for this exercise are pasted below:

Questions for Each Pairing:

- What do you like to do for fun on the weekends?
- What is your favorite movie?
- What is your favorite TV or thing to stream online?
- What are you studying here at the college?
- What are you thinking of the weather lately?
- What's your favorite place to out to eat or what type of food do you generally like?
- (If there's a holiday coming up), what are your plans for the upcoming holiday?
- What do you think of the college?
- Where did you grow up?
- Do you like living in this area?

There are other questions you can probably think of too, the theme of all of them however are they are not overly polarizing and allow for all kinds of open ended responses.

Email Question #4:

Where are you at in terms of having friends? Do have close friendships you enjoy? Do you wish to have more? Or, just the right amount? Also, how would you rate yourself in terms of making new friends?

Worksheet #4

Practicing Conversations

Instructions: Have a conversation like we talked about in class with three different people. Write a summary of what you learned below:

Conversation #1

Person you spoke to:

How did you start the conversation?

What did you talk about in the body of the conversation?

How did you wrap up the conversation?

How would you rate how “performed” in the conversation?

Conversation #2

Person you spoke to:

How did you start the conversation?

What did you talk about in the body of the conversation?

How did you wrap up the conversation?

How would you rate how “performed” in the conversation?

Conversation #3

Person you spoke to:

How did you start the conversation?

What did you talk about in the body of the conversation?

How did you wrap up the conversation?

How would you rate how “performed” in the conversation?

5. Chapter 5: Recognizing and Expressing Feelings

Chapter 5: Recognizing and Expressing Feelings



“Smile!”

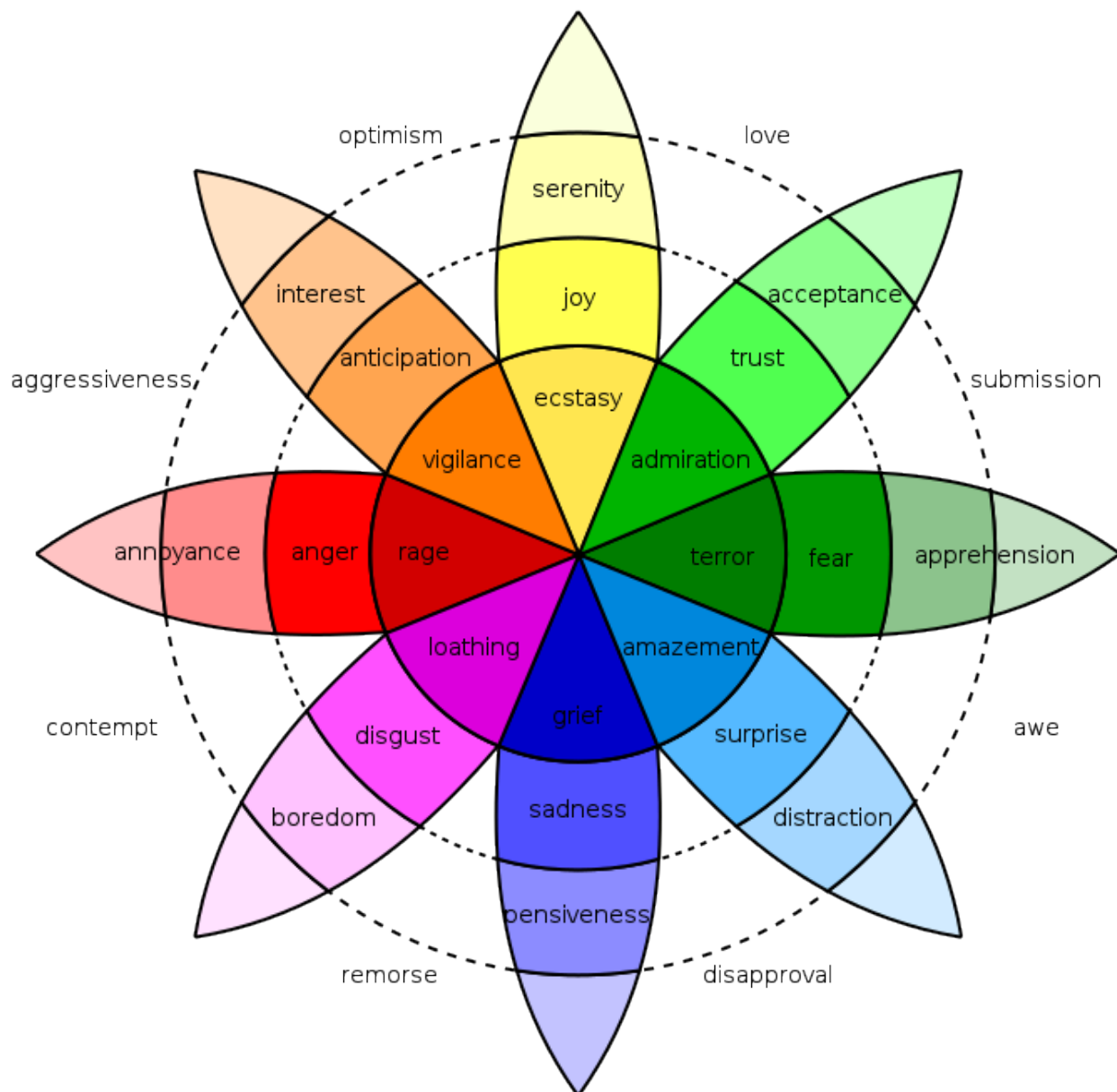
Have you ever walked away from a conversation thinking, “I have this feeling I wasn’t giving the answers that person was hoping to get....” or “I feel like there is this other part of the conversation I completely didn’t pick up on....”? As a Counselor, this can happen to me all the time. You’re trying so hard to focus on the persons feelings and thoughts, creating an environment of support and encouragement for the person, but you just have a feeling you’re not getting it right. What’s even worse, sometimes the person will even verbally confirm you aren’t picking up on what they want you to. When a person confronts you telling you that you’re not understanding, that’s one of the worst feelings of all!

I like to think about emotions in the way I think of the magazine or book cover. Imagine some of your favorite magazines or books—odds are, even if you covered up the part of them that had the actual title of the periodical, you still from the pictures on the cover guess that it is a science textbook, or a gossip magazine. That’s what I like to think emotions are when it comes to conversation—its the cover that contains all the detailed words in the printed material. And even though we may not know the title of that magazine or book, if we can pick up on the general emotions the person is feeling, that gives us enough information to at least keep the conversation going.

So how do we identify feelings? And, how do we show them? I found this great article online at medium.com written

The author cites there are eight primary emotions: Joy, Trust, Fear, Surprise, Sadness, Disgust, Anger, Anticipation. From these eight primary emotions, all kinds of sub-emotions are derived with these emotions at their core. Its a very keenly written scientific model to diagram emotions that I like a lot.

Some of these primary eight are easier to identify than others. I bet of them, you can recognize Joy, Fear, Surprise,



1.
from Robert Plutchik, 1980 Wheel of Emotion (1980)

Sadness, Disgust, and Anger pretty easily. These are emotions we encounter in our day to day lives frequently. Trust and Anticipation are probably tougher ones. Here's a chart I made with a few cues you might look at for help:

Emotions Scale

Emotion	Body Language	Facial Expression	Voice Tone	Voice Speed & Eye Contact
Joy	Open arms & body	Smiling, eyebrows up	High pitched, lilt voice	Fastest, eye contact
Trust	Open arms & body	Smiling, eyebrows up	Average pitched, lilt voice	Average, eye contact
Anticipation	Open arms & body	Smiling, eyebrows up	High pitched, lilt voice	Faster, eye contact
Fear	Closed arms & body	No smile, eyebrows flat	Low pitched, no lilt	Faster, no eye contact
Surprise	Closed arms & body	No smile, eyebrows up	Average pitched, lilt voice	Fast, eye contact
Sadness	Closed arms & body	No smile, eyebrows down	Low pitched, low lilt	Slowest, no eye contact
Disgust	Closed arms & body	No smile, eyebrows down	Low pitched, low lilt	Slow, no eye contact
Anger	Closed arms & body	No smile, eyebrows down	Low pitched, no lilt	Average, eye contact

This table illustrates possible physical characteristics a person displays when feeling certain emotions.

It gives you a few clues on things to be looking for. A nice video that lines up well with cues from the Pixar movie “Inside Out” is below:



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So how about we practice some of these on our own?

Communication Exercise: Conversation Practice

For this exercise, your instructor will need to order emotion flashcards ahead of time. There are tons of these available now on amazon.com or through any educational supply store. A personal favorite of mine is called “Emotions for All” on amazon.com for about \$15. Also, your instructor should write the eight primary emotions mentioned above: Joy, Trust, Fear, Surprise, Sadness, Disgust, Anger, Anticipation each on an individual flashcard.

All students should pair up. For the first round, students should each get a set of those eight primary emotions and try to guess for each which they are displaying. Switch, and do vice versa. For the second round, move onto your emotion flashcards you purchased which have more complex emotions and try again. Do they get easier now that you have a new way to look for cues to identify emotions?

Expressing Emotions

Okay, so now we’ve done some work on recognizing emotions, but what about expressing them? Its one level of frustration to not understand another person when they are trying to convey something to you, but its a much deeper level of frustration when you are trying to convey an emotion to someone else and they don’t understand! Have you ever been in a situation when you’re really angry, or really sad, and no one is seeing how you feel? And even though you might be verbally expressing this emotion, the person still is not grasping how intense it is? This can be very maddening indeed!

I had a student once who shared a quote on being misunderstood that really speaks to this. I asked my student what its like at times to be on the autism spectrum. This is what he said. “I had a counselor in high school who asked me to rate on a one-to-ten scale how upset I was. I would always say ten to everything and he would laugh sometimes and say the situation was really more of a two or three. But he can say this because he doesn’t have to live it like me. The stress really is a ten to me and even if it is a ten every time, so what”!

Indeed, sometimes people don’t pick up on seriousness or intensity of the emotion we are feeling. So how do we express it? And, why is being understood so very important? I found a nice TED talk from Dr. Artūrs Miksons on why expressing your emotions, and being understood by others is so very important:



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Communication Exercise: Getting Emotional Recognition

For this exercise, pair up classmates so each person has a partner where one person is facing your instructor at the front of the class, and the other person has their back to them facing the back of the classroom (if there is an odd number of students in the class, have one group of three where one person faces up front and two facing the back). Your instructor should write out one of the core eight emotions of Joy, Trust, Fear, Surprise, Sadness, Disgust, Anger, Anticipation on the board or a sheet of paper for everyone to see. Then, have pairings face each other. The person who saw the card should try to convey that emotion using whatever words or body language they can to express it which partners try to guess one of the eight core emotions. Whoever does it fastest gets a point. Repeat this for all eight.

Now move onto some of the more complex emotions from the diagram above from Redmaynes workd. Have everyone change their roles—people facing the front of classroom face the back, and vice-versa. These will be harder to communicate. Repeat the process over and over again for the more complex emotions. Keep score until finished (the class can decide how many to do). Afterwards have a discussion, who found this easy? Hard? Why was it easy or hard? Talk as a group about the process and share your observations.

Email Question #5:

After completing all these exercises today, which emotions were the easiest and hardest for you to recognize? And, which emotions were the easiest or hardest for you to convey to others?

Worksheet #5

Worksheet: How Do you Express Emotions?

1. When I'm stressed out, I express it by doing what?
2. When I'm worried, I express it by doing what?
3. When I'm sad, I express it by doing what?
4. When I'm depressed, I express it by doing what?
5. When I'm angry, I express it by doing what?
6. When I'm afraid, I express it by doing what?
7. When I'm really happy, I express it by doing what?
8. When I want to show someone I care or feel affection towards them, I express it by doing what?

9. When I feel lonely, I express it by doing what?

10. When I'm really excited, I express it by doing what?

Now, answer the following:

1. Do you suspect everyone expresses their emotions the same way you do? Or do you think others may do things differently?

2. If you think others do it differently, which emotions, and how?

3. Do you feel at times people misread your emotions?

4. Do you at times struggle reading others emotions?

6. Chapter 6: Listening and Responding

Chapter 6: Listening and Responding



“Can You Hear Me!?”

I always start off this topic with the same lecture. I am an avid coffee drinker. Most every single morning at work I go to our campuses cafeteria before I start, get a large coffee, put one creamer in it and pay at the register. Having been here over 17 years, I have repeated this process most every morning literally hundreds of times. As a part of this daily exercise, I almost always interact with the same person at our cash register. His name is Edgardo and is always very friendly. We have had the near same identical interaction countless times. Edgardo will say, “two dollars, please”, I will pay him the two dollars and say, “thank you”. He will then say, “have a nice day”, I will say, “You too”, and then I walk off. Day after day the process continues...

“Two dollars please”, “Thank you”, “Have a nice day” “You too”, walk off;

“Two dollars please”, “Thank you”, “Have a nice day” “You too”, walk off;

“Two dollars please”, “You too”, “Have a nice day”, “You too”, walk off.

And so on and so on.

One day, instead of our normal interaction, Edgardo said to me....

“Two dollars please”, (I said “thank you”). “Do you have any plans for the weekend”?

Can you guess what I said? If you guessed “You too”, you’d be right. I was only half paying attention to Edgardo and took our interaction for granted, anticipating what I thought he was going to say. About 30 seconds later after walking away it hit me how I had not been paying attention. I turned around and ran back to apologize to Edgardo for my poor listening skills, but by the time I got back to him he was already with another customer and busy. I’d lost a chance to have a deeper interaction with a person because of my lack of paying attention. I was frustrated with myself afterwards for such a missed opportunity.

Have you ever had a similar experience? Perhaps you were playing a video game when a parent was trying to talk to you about doing something important. Or, perhaps you were texting on your phone with a friend was talking to you. You look back later, and realized you missed most everything that was being communicated. How do you think that makes the other person feel? In most cases, when we’re not paying attention, the other person usually can tell this but is being polite by not saying anything. But next time they want to talk to you, and they see you doing a similar thing,

they may not make that effort. In fact, they may avoid you all together. And then, your relationship with that person suffers.

Its so very important when we listen to people we do indeed listen for the exact same reasons why its so very important when we talk to people we want to be heard. That sharing of mutual understanding is the emotional glue that keeps us all attached to one another. If we take it for granted the bonds between us all weaken.

Cell phones have had a really negative impact on this dynamic. Now, don't get me wrong—I love my iPhone. I am on it all the same looking up information, writing posts on social media, or texting my friends and family. But I've learned when I'm having a conversation with someone, the best thing for me to do is to put the physically out of my line of sight and into my pocket instead. The temptation is just too great for me to interact with my phone if I have it in my hands our out on the table. By taking it out sight, it forces me to focus on the most important element of my current environment, which is communicating with the person in front of me. I wish people would do this more. For the rest of your day, I want to challenge you to do the same thing: every time you have a conversation with someone, put your phone in your pocket, or out of your physical reach, so you're forced to focus on the person in front of you. See how you do or if you notice a change.

Here's a nice short video on different techniques to improve your listening skills I like:



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Now, lets do an exercise to see if we can put these tasks at action.

Communication Exercise: Listening with and without Distraction

For this activity, you CAN use your smartphones if you have one for the exercise. If you don't have a smartphone, ask

your instructor to give you a fidget (instructors should have fidgets on hand) instead. You are to form two circles, just like you've done in the past, with students each facing one another. If there is an odd number of students, have one group with three people. You are to have two conversations: one, where you both members are allowed to play with their phones/fidgets during the talk, and then a second, where both parties must put their phone/fidgets either in their pockets or under their chairs. Talk about about 2 minutes per interaction. After you've had a talk with and without your phone/fidgets, rotate members of the outside circle and repeat the exercise. Do this three or four times.

Afterwards, as a large group, have a larger talk with your instructor: did you notice a difference? How much do you remember from the conversations? The same amount? Different amounts? See if you can see a differentiation.

Being Heard

What about being heard? Why is it sometimes people don't seem to listen to us? Could there be reasons? In a wonderful TED video I'll share below, Julian Treasure shares there are "7 Deadly Sins" when it comes to speaking to other people; or 7 things that when we engage in when talking to others too much, people eventually, no longer want to talk with us very much. They include:

1. Gossiping
2. Judging
3. Being overly negative
4. Complaining
5. Blaming other people all the time for everything
6. Exaggerating or lying too much
7. Dogmatism (giving your opinion all the time and acting like your opinion is 100% fact)

The video is below:



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I really like this list. When students share with me they get sad because they think people avoid them, I share this list and ask them to think about their conversations. Do they engage in any of these behaviors a lot? Are there ones they especially do excessively?

Communication Exercise: Identifying Bad Communication Behaviors

As a large classroom, watch Julian Treasure's TED video. Then, have your instructor write each of his 7 “deadly sins” and have everyone in the class think of a couple examples of each one. After giving examples, take polls on which ones of these people think they engage in more than others. Process as a group how you can all work together to avoid doing this in the future.

Email Question #6:

If you had to pick one of Julian Treasure's "deadly sins" you tend to engage in the most, which would it be? Are there ways you can lesson the degree you do this in the future?

Worksheet #6

Thinking about Julian Treasure's "7 Deadly Sins of Communication", think of an example of each of these behaviors that you have engaged in, or witnessed someone else engage in.

Gossiping

Judging

Being overly negative

Complaining

Blaming other people all the time for everything

Exaggerating or lying too much

Dogmatism (giving your opinion all the time and acting like your opinion is 100% fact)

7. Chapter 7: Confrontation and Managing Anger

Chapter 7: Confrontation and Managing Anger

Me during an argument Me thinking about the
Argument during a shower



“I’m so angry!!!”

Confrontation and anger are paradoxical emotions: of most any emotions in the human spectrum, I believe they are the most vulnerable to misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Think about it: have you ever had a time when you were mildly upset about something, offered feedback, and the person overreacted to your dissension. Or, have you ever been REALLY upset about something, and then the person treated you like your concern was no big deal? Either way it can be very frustrating! Indeed, it can be hard to be understood when we are frustrated.

So what triggers anger in most of us? Is it impatience? Frustration? Here is a nice video on sources that I like:



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Now, lets do an exercise to see if we can put these tasks at action.

Communication Exercise: Identifying Triggers for Anger

What are some of your triggers for anger? Is it things like the way things are organized? People? Things? Partner up with someone and talk about the following questions.

1. A big trigger of anger for me is.....
2. When it comes to other people, I hate it when they.....
3. A thing I do myself that I think can trigger people unintentionally at times is....
4. When I do feel triggered, the thing I do that HURTS the situation is....
5. When I do feel triggered, the thing I do that HELPS the situation is.....

Did you find you and your partner had some similar triggers? Or different ones? Did you learn something from them that could help you?

Controlling Your Anger

What about anger management? How are you at this? How do you manage it? Dr. Christian Conte has 5 specific suggestions on how to manage it I enjoy. Watch his video:



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Communication Exercise: Identifying Bad Communication Behaviors

Lets review Dr. Conte's 5 keys. They are:

1. Don't be attached
2. Don't take things personally
3. Learning when to let things go
4. Be aware of what's going on in your body
5. Learning how to say what's really going on with you

Your instructors will role play two people getting upset (if there is only one instructor, this can be a classmate and an instructor), watch their interaction and then afterwards identify different ways the upset people could approach each of these steps. Discuss in a large group.

Email Question #7:

When it comes to your anger, how do you think it is the hardest to control? Why do you think its so hard to control it during these types of situations?

Worksheet #7

Lets take Dr. Contes 5 steps and apply them to yourself. Think of a time you handled your anger poorly-what did you do wrong? How might you have handled it differently? Write a time you can think of and summarize it below:

Now, apply his 5 principles. How could you use each of them to create a different way to address the issue in the future? Take each step and write your thoughts.

-Don't be attached

-Don't take things personally

-Learn when to let things go

-Be aware of what's going on in your body

-Learn how to say what's really going on with you

8. Chapter 8: Job Interviewing Skills

Chapter 8: Job Interviewing Skills



Don't Go to an Interview Like This!

The suit I'm wearing is a Pac-man suit (if you magnify it you can see all the Pac-men and ghosts) that I wore for Halloween a few years ago. Wearing a suit or some level of professional looking dress is an important step when it comes to preparing for an interview. Another bonus is that it helps boost confidence. The more confident we feel, the better we tend to interview. What are some of the best dressing tips when it comes to interviews? This video I found helpful



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At College of DuPage, we have a wonderful Career Services Center. Their website <https://cod.edu/careerservices> Check it out! Here is a helpful video about them:



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Communication Exercise: Practicing Interview Questions

One of the best ways to get better at interviewing skills is to practice answering questions. Here are some helpful basic ones that come out in most any interview:

1. Tell me about yourself
2. Tell me about your strengths and what you're good at
3. Tell me how a previous employer or past instructor would describe yourself
4. Tell me what you think you could improve upon about yourself
5. Tell me where you see yourself in five years

Here are some more advanced ones you may see depending on the position you are interviewing for:

1. Why do you want to leave your current company?
2. Why was there a gap in your employment between [insert date] and [insert date]?
3. What can you offer us that someone else can not?
4. What are three things your former manager would like you to improve on?
5. Are you willing to relocate?
6. Are you willing to travel?
7. Tell me about an accomplishment you are most proud of.

8. Tell me about a time you made a mistake.
9. What is your dream job?
10. How did you hear about this position?
11. What would you look to accomplish in the first 30 days/60 days/90 days on the job?
12. Discuss your resume.
13. Discuss your educational background.
14. Describe yourself.
15. Tell me how you handled a difficult situation.
16. Why should we hire you?
17. Why are you looking for a new job?
18. Would you work holidays/weekends?
19. How would you deal with an angry or irate customer?
20. What are your salary requirements?
21. Give a time when you went above and beyond the requirements for a project.
22. Who are our competitors?
23. What was your biggest failure?
24. What motivates you?
25. What's your availability?
26. Who's your mentor?
27. Tell me about a time when you disagreed with your boss.
28. How do you handle pressure?
29. What is the name of our CEO?
30. What are your career goals?
31. What gets you up in the morning?
32. What would your direct reports say about you?
33. What were your bosses' strengths/weaknesses?
34. If I called your boss right now & asked what is an area that you could improve on, what would they say?
35. Are you a leader or a follower?
36. What was the last book you've read for fun?
37. What are your co-worker pet peeves?
38. What are your hobbies?
39. What is your favorite website?
40. What makes you uncomfortable?
41. What are some of your leadership experiences?
42. How would you fire someone?
43. What do you like the most and least about working in this industry?
44. Would you work 40+ hours a week?
45. What questions haven't I asked you?
46. What questions do you have for me?

Do all of the first five most common questions and then choose 5 more from the second list and practice doing them with a partner. Then switch off and do the same with them reversing roles. Give each other feedback. How did you each do?

Building a Resume

Now what about a resume. Do you have one? How about trying to make one out? Below is a nice video from Melissa Schertz of COD's own Career Services on how to do so.



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Communication Exercise: Sharing your Resume with Others

Just as you shared you practiced your interview skills with a partner, after you've created a resume share this with a partner as well and give each other feedback.

Email Question #6:

How do you feel about interviews? Do you think you're a good interviewer? Do they scare you? Or are they no big deal? Tell your instructor your thoughts.

Worksheet #6

A new trend in interviewing is called Behavioral Interviewing. In behavioral interviews, people are asked to give examples of different behaviors they have demonstrated in their past. Take a look at each of the questions, and give an example of each.

1. **Example of being flexible–**
2. **Example of having a good work ethic–**
3. **Example of being a leader (NOT necessarily being a manager)–**
4. **Example of being assertive–**
5. **Example of being a team player–**

9. Chapter 9: Non-verbal Communication

Chapter 9: Non-Verbal Communication



“Do you SEE What I Mean?!?”

This is a picture of my husband and I the day we adopted our first dog, Mocha. While he (in the green) looks happy and thrilled to have her in our lives, you might notice I do not have a similar look of confidence! The truth was while I did want to adopt a dog, I was very worried if I'd be able to take on all the responsibilities of pet ownership—letting them out, getting their shots, potty training, I was very scared! Mocha too as you can see, shares our concern! Thankfully, I was able to keep my fears at bay and now can say adopting her was one of the smartest decisions we ever made. Still though, on that day if you had asked me how I was, my verbal communication would likely have been that I would say “I'm fine”, but the photo shows otherwise! If you're not picking up on the hesitancy in this photo though don't worry. Non-verbal communication is something we all struggle with.

I LOVE the following video showing principles of non-verbal communication through a Pixar short-film, “For the Birds”. Watch it.



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The video nicely introduces some non-verbal concepts. Specifically:

Proxemics–The use of physical space

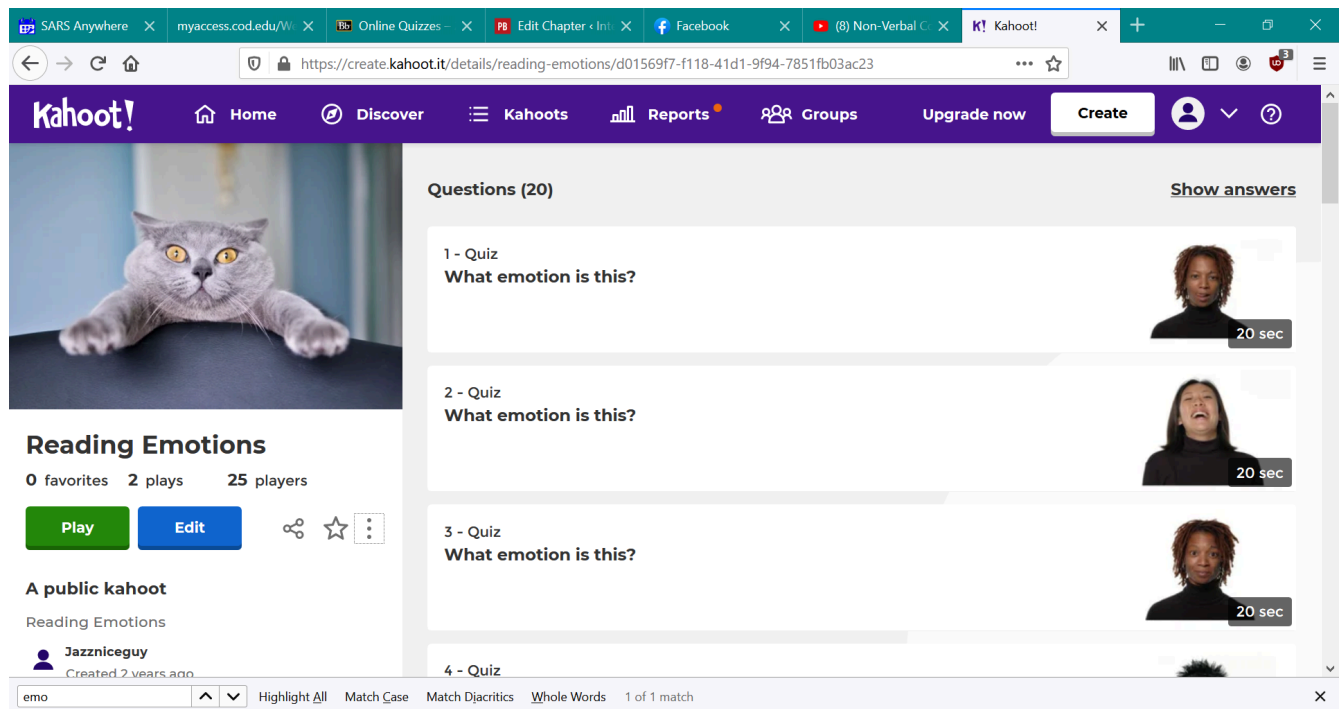
Physical Appearance–The way we dress and make ourselves look

Kinesics–The use of facial expressions to communicate emotion

Vocatlistics–The tone and loudness of our voice to indicate power and influence

I love at the end of the video the author, James Ham shows how he can apply these principles in his own daily life!

Communication Exercise: Lets Play Kahoot!



In class you will play a Kahoot game on reading emotions. If you're not in this class but wish to play, just do a search for the Kahoot profile, "Jazzniceguy" and the title "Reading Emotions" and see how you do. Good luck!

TED Talk on the Power of Non-Verbal Communication

This is a really neat video from Ted Navarro who is a retired FBI agent who talks about his experiences of over 25 years and how non-verbal communication can be a great tool in reading emotions. Take a look.



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Email Question #9:

Which emotions do you find the hardest to pick up on from other people? When you're trying to communicate emotions yourself, which ones do you have a hard time showing?

Worksheet #9

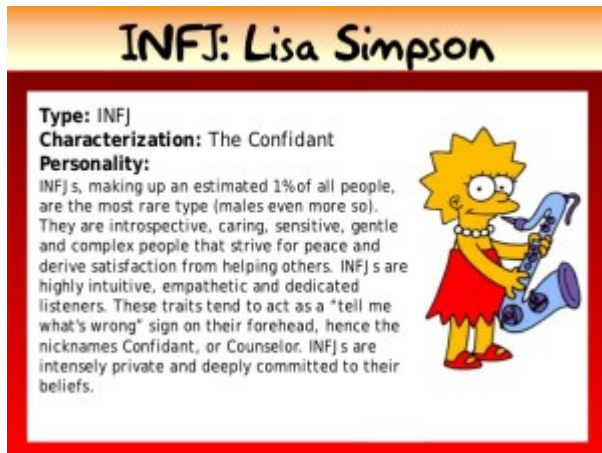
This week you should work on practicing showing and reading emotions. Find a friend or family member to do this exercise with. Attempt to communicate non-verbally with them each of these emotions and see if they can figure out what you're communicating. Then, have your partner do the same thing. Here are the emotions to try:

- Anger
- Sadness
- Happiness
- Frustration
- Laughter
- Pain
- Disgust
- Anxious
- Tired
- Impatient

How did it go? Did you read your partners emotions 100%? Did they read yours? Share your experiences.

10. Chapter 10: The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

Chapter 10: The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator



“I am not an INFJ but I play one on TV....”

This may make no sense to you right now, (and no, I'm not an INFJ, but an INFP), but after completing this Chapter it may make more sense. Hopefully you've taken the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator already. If not, there's a nice informal assessment you can take here. <https://www.truity.com/test/type-finder-personality-test-new>

Introducing The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator:

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a test that is often used in helping people understand themselves better and find preferences. Katharine Cook Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers first developed the test during World War II patterning it after psychologist Carl Jung's theories of personality. It has been refined several times through the years and is used in a variety of areas including leadership training, career exploration, relationship and marriage counseling, employee training, and for personal development.

The Centers for Applications of Psychological Type (CPP) state the MBTI is “the most widely used personality theory in history”. Indeed, the MBTI is used in a variety of areas. From career exploration, to conflict management, to business practices, to many other areas, the MBTI is a widely relied upon tool for providing insight into ourselves and to provide direction for our futures.

Please make a note that the MBTI is designed to measure *preferences* for different personality types. That is, it directs us to see the way we prefer to do and view things, but we are always capable of looking or doing things another way as well. For example, first try writing your name with the hand you normally write with. Now, try writing your name with the opposite hand. Obviously, you are capable of doing so, but it feels a little different and perhaps a little less comfortable. This is because your *preference* for writing is your dominant hand—but this is in no way absolute.

Specifically, the MBTI examines four dimensions of personality and determines in each dimension which way we tend to *prefer* to interact with the world. Those four dimensions are:

- How we direct our energy
- How we gather information

- How we make decisions
- How we deal with the other world

For each dimension, we distinct each into two possibilities, and find people tend to lean towards one possibility or the other. Let's look more closely at each of these:

How we direct or energy: Extraversion vs. Introversion

People who lean towards extraversion tend to focus on people and things on the outer world. People who lean towards introversion focus on the thoughts, feelings, and impressions of the inner world.

How we gather information: iNtution vs. Sensing

People who lean towards sensing tend to focus on facts and details that can be confirmed by experience. People who lean towards intuition focus on possibilities and relationships among ideas.

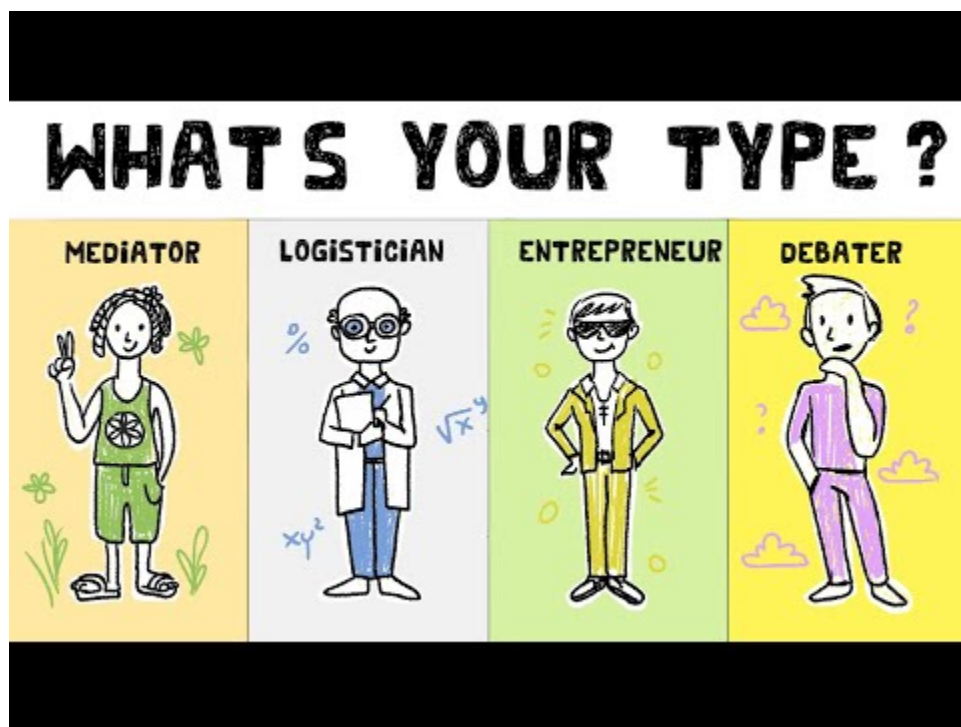
How we make decisions: Feeling vs. Thinking

People who lean towards thinking use impersonal, objective, logical analysis to reach conclusions. People who lean towards feeling tend to use person-centered, subjective analysis to reach conclusions.

How we deal with the other world: Perceiving vs. Judging

People who lean towards judging then to prefer to plan and organize themselves to make decisions and come to closure on decisions. People who lean towards perceiving on the other hand tend to be spontaneous and adaptable, collecting information and usually staying open to new options and ideas.

Here's a nice short video summarizing the different types



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Now, lets do an exercise to see these traits in action

Communication Exercise: What do you See?

What do you see?

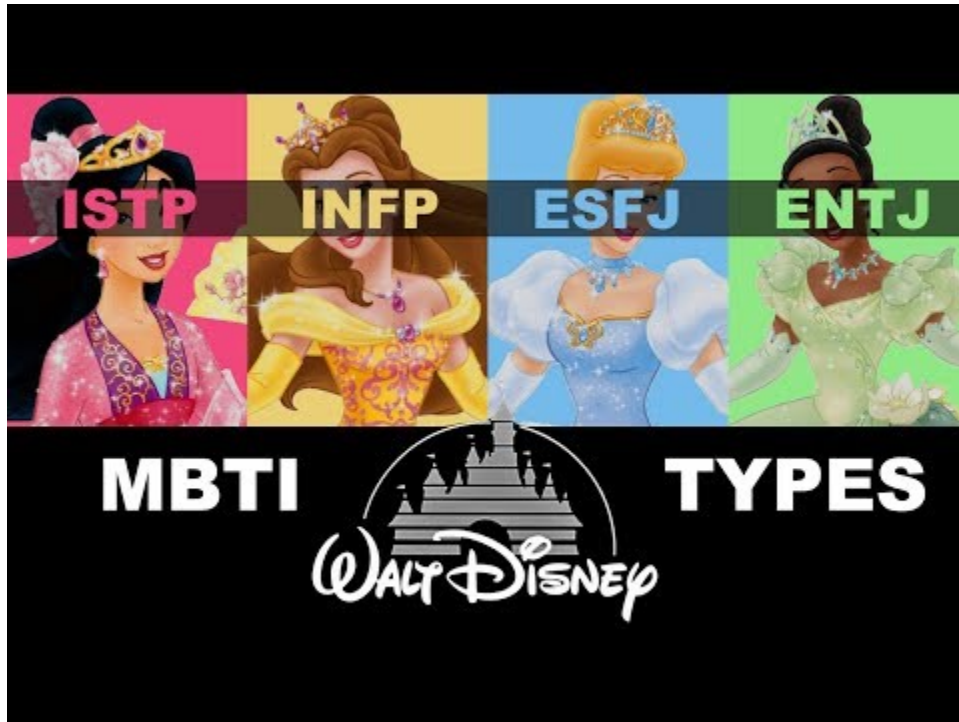


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Take a look at this picture above. What do you see? Do you see a heart, an eye, numbers, and more? Or, when you look at it do you find yourself thinking about a science-fiction adventure or complex short-story about magic? This is a nice illustration of Sensing versus iNtuition. We see different things but all look at the same photograph!

MBTI in so Many Forms!

There are a TON of different cartoons and fictional interpretation of MBTI results and different characters. MBTI and the Simpsons, Star Wars, Marvel superheros, the list goes on and on. I find a lot of the students I work with love Disney, so here is a personal favorite of theirs:



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Email Question #10:

What was your MBTI type and the description of it? Do you agree with it? Disagree?

Worksheet #10

Think about the MBTI and how you have used it today. Using your creativity, think about how the Myers-Briggs might be able to assist in any ONE of the following situations and post a message on how specifically it might be useful:

- For understanding yourself better
- For the workplace

-For choosing a career

II. Chapter 11: Navigating Social Media

Chapter 11: Navigating Social Media



“So Much of Our Lives are Now Online....”

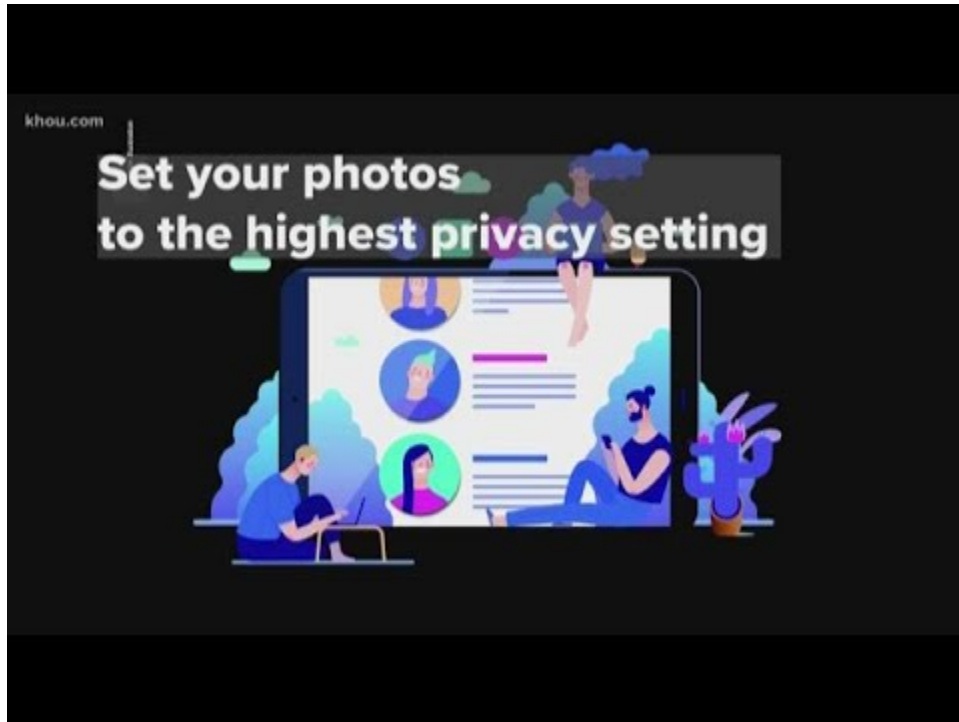
I grew up in a different age. As a person in their later 40's the Internet was just a new phenomena when I was your age. Believe it or not, we used to have to use our land-line phones to call a phone number where there was a bunch of buzzing sounds afterwards and then we could connect. Pictures were very slow to upload, videos almost impossible, and your internet would disconnect anytime you got another phone call or for a multitude of other random reasons. Gosh, I'm typing this and I feel like a dinosaur!

You likely grew up in this most recent generation where going online and social media were a part of your life from a very young age. There's pros and cons to this most certainly. Probably the biggest con I find for students is when they are younger (and less mature), they may share things online that they later regret. Honestly if I were of this generation, I probably would have fallen in the same trap. So what should we avoid sharing? I found this article on college.grad.com I really like. <https://collegegrad.com/blog/10-things-you-should-never-post-on-social-media>

Here are the 10 things they suggest:

1. Profanity
2. Abusive Content
3. “Adult” Sexual Content
4. Illegal Content
5. Offensive Content
6. Negative Opinions about your Employer/Boss/Professor
7. Drug Related Content
8. Poor Grammar
9. Poor Spelling
10. Threats

I would add to this list personal information at the top. This is so very important. Things like your birthdate, address, phone number, and social security should NEVER be online. Here's a nice video summarizing these topics. Here is a helpful story for KHOU Houston News on what you shouldn't share, and the bad consequences that can arrive if you do:



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So fair enough, but what about making friends? When do you send a “friend” request? When do you write back? These are deeper questions that can be challenging. A good general rule of thumb is always treat someone how you want to be treated yourself. If someone sent a friend request to you and you didn’t want to accept it, and then a week later they did it again, and then again, and again, how would you react? You would likely become irritated and wish they would take the hint! What about with messaging on Facebook or Instagram or whatever else you use? If someone messaged you 20 times a day and you didn’t write back at that pace, wouldn’t you become annoyed? Always ask yourself, “what if our roles were reversed?”

Communication Exercise: Good idea or Bad Idea?

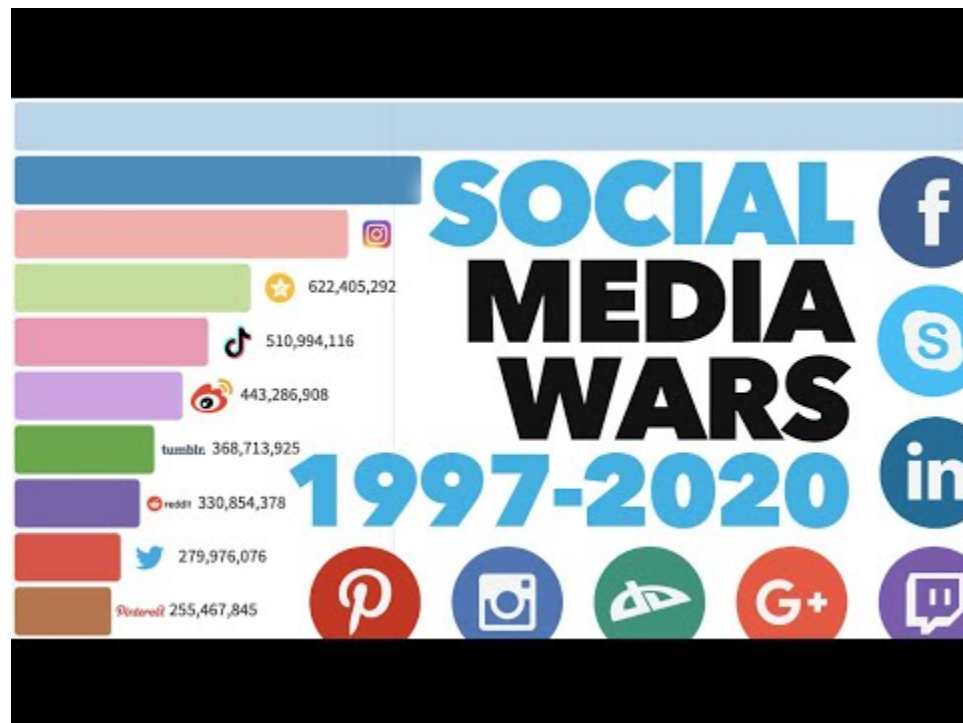
Read each of the statements and write next to each if you think it would be a “good idea”, or “bad idea”. Then, have your partner do the same. Discuss what you came up with!

1. Sending a friend request to a classmate you’ve been talking with a lot lately
2. Sharing personal details about your family to someone you just met at a party on social messaging
3. Telling someone you’ve never met in person before who found you online your birthdate
4. Posting your birthdate and contact information on social media for people who are “connected” to you
5. Posting a photo of you in a revealing position on your feed to make a joke about something
6. Tagging a “friend” saying something mean about them
7. Sending a request to connect to a teacher or co-worker

8. Writing a message to your boss on social media to develop a better friendship with them
9. Posting a picture of a friend without their permission
10. Using your work email for personal correspondence

How is Social Media Changing?

Its funny to note the social media is ever evolving task. Its also interesting that things that were popular just a year ago, are considered dated now just months later. A key is to not take anything too seriously. Look at all the change that has happened in such a short period of time!



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Email Question #II:

What are your thoughts on social media? What do you use? What do you like to do with it or why do you not use it?

Worksheet #II

Think about the things you WOULD want people to know about you on social media. If you could summarize them would they include?

What mistakes have you seen people make with social media? What have you learned from this?

They say with social media anything you post “you should expect to last forever”. What does this mean to you? How can you apply this thinking to what you share?

12. Chapter 12: Final Thoughts

Chapter 12: Confidence and Final Thoughts



“Its Time to Say Goodbye....”

I'm writing this final Chapter in August of 2020 at the center of our new COVID world. This entire experience has certainly put things into perspective of us all. More than likely the career world of the future will be a different one than any of us expected even just a few months ago. If you're reading this you're probably nodding your head right now, if and you're reading this as this pandemic is continuing, you may even sigh and feel like thinking of the future is pointless given you don't even know what things will be like next year. I understand your concerns and pain.

But we have to hold on and look at the larger picture. No matter WHAT lies around the corner for us in the weeks and months ahead, we know that more than ever it is important to know who we are and what we stand for. More importantly, we have to keep going and not lose hope. We have to remind ourselves as frustrating as things might be for us right now, there are people in the world who are likely suffering much more than ourselves and feeling even more isolated and alone than we feel ourselves. It's important we be there for one another any by knowing who we uniquely are, we can then uniquely positively impact someone else. This is what I hope this book as given you—a ability to see the unique, individual person you are and perhaps even some insight on how to become an even better person. This will pass, and we will be stronger on the other side.

For me, thinking about things that make me proud give me hope. My students give me hope too. I wanted to write a little about a group I started many years ago called Autismerica. Here is a video about it:



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Back in 2010 I met with a parent who had a son starting at my college the next fall. She explained her son went to a smaller high school where they knew of only one other student on the autism spectrum, and he was two grade levels behind her son. She said her son spent most of his time at home playing video games but he'd like to have friends to do things with. So far, however, he just hadn't had much luck making friends at school. The mother wanted to know if there were any other new students in the college that had a similar profile, and if so, could I introduce them to one another?

Her question got me thinking: certainly I did know other students who were in a similar or identical situation, but I wasn't really sure how to approach the process of bringing them together. I also worried that if I reached out to specific students, others I might feel slighted. And what if I was just wrong in my efforts at friend matchmaking? The whole situation left me feeling puzzled, but it also struck home the idea that there must be a solution to the problem of students on the spectrum being isolated from each other.

I asked a colleague what she thought. She agreed, there were more and more students on the autism spectrum coming to college, seeking out some kind of connection, yet unsure how to forge it. We wanted to get some more specific numbers so we looked at our case files to see how many students had self-identified as either on the autism spectrum or diagnosed with Asperger's to get a sense of what we were dealing with. Combined, we knew of roughly a hundred students who were coming to the college or were already enrolled in the college who were on the spectrum. That got us thinking: what if there were a way to get even some members of this group together? What would be the outcome?

We decided we should try to find out. Taking the risk, we sent a letter to each of the families we knew about. We picked an evening near the end of the term and encouraged students to come meet one another. We told them we had no pre-determined plans on what to do once we all arrived, but hoped as a group we could find a solution to this question of how to best use our meetings together. Our only goal was to connect students with other students, and from there we would see what happened.

At last the night arrived. My colleague and I reserved the campus games room, with its pool and ping-pong tables. We

thought the room might provide a nice recreational tone before the meeting. As the minutes came closer, my stomach was in knots: how many people would arrive? I was having flashbacks to my high school graduation party, which I unwisely scheduled the night before graduation when everyone had a million other parties to attend, leading to a low turn out. I was back in high school all over again.

The first person and his parents arrived. And then another. And then another. And another. Before we knew it, we were able to count a good forty students who were in the room, and with them, most every one had also brought at least one parent along for support. We could tell there was a lot of resistance from the students themselves—the majority *did* not want to be there, but their parents most certainly did want them to be there, and the parents wanted to be there, too.

I gathered everyone together, but I tried to separate the students as far from the parents as possible. They could only be a few rows apart, but I knew that if this was to work, the meeting had to be in a format dictated by the students. I asked them hypothetically if they got together once a month for an evening what would they enjoy doing. “Not talking” one shouted out. Another said the same thing. “Everyone always wants to talk about feelings and stuff. This stuff sucks. It’s no fun.” Such was the theme from the larger group in the room.

“So what do you like to do for fun?” I asked. The answer was things I already knew, but wanted to be sure: video games, watching anime, drawing, board games, and computing were the most frequent responses. Again they reiterated: *no talking*. This message came out loud and clear. I wrote all the things down people asked for on the chalkboard.

Given all this information, I made a proposal that in retrospect, I should have thought about before sharing. I asked the students, if next month I was able to get some video game systems, rent some anime movies, bring more computers, would they be willing to come again and give this another shot? While most of the students were hesitant initially to say yes, after looking behind their backs to their parents, most acquiesced and agreed to try again. Soon after I drew the meeting to a close. I didn’t have the things that were needed in that moment to make things happen, and I didn’t want to set a tone for failure. We all agreed to come again next month in December and to try to have a good time.

After the meeting, I sent an email out to everyone who worked at my college. Luckily, I work at a pretty big school, so there were many recipients. I asked them if they had any old video game systems, board games, animated DVDS, or related things collecting dust, might they consider donating them to my office for use. I also contacted our Libraries office and arranged for several TV and DVD players to be made available. I also moved the location to another lounge that had a few computers also in the area—probably not enough for everyone, but enough to show I made an effort to meet my end of the bargain.

Within a few days, the donations from staff members came pouring in. I was surprised how many video game systems we got, especially since most cost anywhere from \$100 to \$300 for even a used unit in the store. We also got lots of board games, and one unexpected donation: a tape-deck karaoke machine. The player was so old the only songs were corny ones, but still, perhaps someone might find it useful. I brought all the donations and set up all the technology a few hours before our second meeting, and again waited nervously . . .

I then told everyone to go out and enjoy themselves. I shared what video game systems we had, what board games and videos, and crossed my fingers. Right away two-thirds of the attendees ran for the video game units. While most of the video games were on the older side, I found the type of video game didn’t matter much to the students. In fact, many enjoyed the older games, taking a trip down memory lane.

In time, our numbers grew, and we are still going strong. We normally have close to seventy or eighty people in attendance at our meetings. We also started sending out invitations to the local high schools and universities in the area inviting them to participate in our meetings. The group has become a wonderful way for students who plan to attend our school in the fall to develop a comfort level with the college before they formally begin their first year.

Last year, we were featured on the WGN Chicago News:



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So why do I share this story? Because it makes me smile. It gives me hope. During these difficult times, it can be really hard to smile and have hope, I know. But we have to keep going. Think about what makes you smile, what gives you hope....share that with the people around you.

In the meantime, know you're not alone. Reach out to those you love. If you don't have anyone, reach out to resources at your college and others who might be alone out there. In these times we need one another more than ever. Thank you for reading this book, and I wish you health and prosperity in your futures. Stay well.

Interpersonal Skills for Life and Work for College Students on the Autism Spectrum

Writers Bio: Dr. Michael Duggan—LCPC, CRC, is a Professor and a Counselor for Students with Disabilities at College of DuPage (COD), where he is well known for his expertise and his passion for empowering students with disabilities. In his time at COD he has helped establish a wide variety of programs for students, and his work has been featured by the Chicago Tribune, Daily Herald, patch.com, and WGN Television. He has also been awarded COD's Outstanding Divisional Faculty of the Year, Outstanding Academic Advisor of the Year (twice), and Outstanding Club Advisor of the Year for his work on Autismerica—a social/support organization for young adults and families on the autism spectrum throughout Chicagoland. His first published book is titled “First Class Support for College Students on the Autism Spectrum: Practical Advice for College Counselors and Educators”, and his website is michaelwduggan.com. He apologizes ahead of time for his salty tongue but insists his Irish grandparents on both sides would be proud.

