Chapter 1

What Is Human Relations?

I present myself to you in a form suitable to the relationship I wish to achieve with you.

  - Luigi Pirandello

If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude.

  - Maya Angelou

No One Wants to Work with Her

Jenny is going to a BBQ at Monica and Harvey's house this afternoon. Because it is a big annual event, it is usually a large party. She will likely know about half the people, as Monica and Harvey invite people from all aspects of their lives. As Jenny enters the backyard, she sees familiar faces, as expected, but also sees a lot of people she doesn't recognize. Immediately she starts fidgeting, as Jenny isn't good at making small talk. Instead of making eye contact and going over to people who are acquaintances, she drops her potluck dish down, grabs a drink from the cooler, and tries to find Monica so she will have someone to talk with.

At work, Jenny avoids interpersonal relationships and small talk because she is uncomfortable revealing too much of herself. When Jenny attends meetings at work, she sighs impatiently when someone is late and when people veer too far from the topic, and she makes sure to bring people back to reality. When choosing project teams, people rarely want to work with Jenny, even though she is very capable in her job. Some of the women from the office get together for lunch on Tuesdays, but Jenny is never invited. Needless to say, Jenny isn't well liked at work.

We have all met someone like Jenny, who is seemingly uncomfortable with herself and unpleasant. We may even try to avoid the Jennys we know. Despite Jenny being good at her job, no one wants to work with her. You would think that success at work only takes talent at job-specific tasks. However, this isn't the case. As we will discuss throughout this chapter and the book, successful people have the skills to

do the job, but they also have the human relations skills to get along with others. The focus of this chapter will be personality, attitudes, self-esteem, and perceptions—all of these topics and more impact our ability to get along with others.

1.1 Why Study Human Relations?

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Be able to define human relations.
2. Discuss why human relations skills are necessary in your future workplace.
3. Explain how the progression of human relations studies relates to today's human relations in your life.

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The study and understanding of human relations can help us in our workplace, and as a result, assist us in achieving career success. The better our human relations, the more likely we are to grow both professionally and personally. Knowing how to get along with others, resolve workplace conflict, manage relationships, communicate well, and make good decisions are all skills we will discuss throughout the book.

Why Human Relations?

So, what is human relations? We can define **human relations**[1] as relations with or between people, particularly in a workplace or professional setting.Merriam Webster Dictionary, accessed January 30, 2012, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/human%20relations From a personal perspective, there are many advantages to having good human relations skills. First, of the top ten reasons people are fired, several reasons relate back to lack of human relations skills—for example, the inability to work within a team, personality issues, sexual harassment, and dishonesty.Natalie Jones, "10 Most Common Reasons Why People Are Fired," Wikinut article, February 28, 2010, accessed January 31, 2012, http://business.wikinut.com/10-Most-Common-Reasons-People-are-Fired/ggcsrftv/ Other reasons, perhaps not directly related to human relations, include absenteeism, poor performance, stealing, political reasons, downsizing, and sabotage. Second, people who are competent team players and have a good work ethic tend to get promoted faster.Jean Maye, "7 Steps to Getting Promoted," *Chicago Tribune*, 2012, accessed January 31, 2012, http://www.chicagotribune.com/classified/jobs/sns-jobs-steps-promotion,0,6989913.story In fact, according to guru on personal development Brian Tracy, 85 percent of your success in life is determined by social skills and the ability to interact positively and effectively with others.Brian Tracy, "Mastering Human Relationships," Brian Tracy International, August 19, 2009, accessed January 31, 2012, http://www.briantracy.com/blog/personal-success/mastering-human-relationships/ Another reason to develop good

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1. Relations with or between people, particularly in a workplace or professional setting.

relationships with others relates to your own personal happiness. According to psychologist Sydney Jourard, most joy in life comes from happy relationships with other people.Tracy, Brian, "Mastering Human Relationships," Brian Tracy International, August 19, 2009, accessed January 31, 2012, http://www.briantracy.com/blog/personal-success/mastering-human-relationships/

Consider John, a very talented project manager but lacking in human relations skills. While he is easily able to plan and execute the finest details for a project, no one likes to work with him. He doesn't make efforts to get to know his team members and he comes across as unfriendly and unapproachable. How successful do you think John will be in his workplace? While he has the skills necessary to do the job, he doesn't have the people skills that can help him excel at it. One could say he does not have emotional intelligence skills—that is, the ability to understand others—therefore, he may always find himself wondering why he isn't more successful at work (we will discuss emotional intelligence in Chapter 2 "Achieve Personal Success"). While project management skills are something we can learn, managers find it difficult to hire people without the soft skills, or human relations skills. We aren't saying that skills are not important, but human relations skills are equally as important as technical skills to determine career and personal success. Consider human relations skills in your personal life, as this is equally important. Human relations skills such as communication and handling conflict can help us create better relationships. For example, assume Julie talks behind people's backs and doesn't follow through on her promises. She exhibits body language that says "get away from me" and rarely smiles or asks people about themselves. It is likely that Julie will have very few, if any, friends. If Julie had positive human relations skills, there is a much better chance she could improve her personal relationships.

We can benefit personally and professionally from good human relations skills, but how do organizations benefit? Since many companies' organizational structures depend upon people working together, positive human relations skills reduce conflict in the workplace, thereby making the workplace more productive. **Organizational structures**[2] refer to the way a company arranges people, jobs, and communications so that work can be performed. In today's business world, teams are used to accomplish company goals because teamwork includes people with a variety of skills. When using those skills in a team, a better product and better ideas are usually produced. In most businesses, to be successful at our job, we need to depend on others. The importance of human relations is apparent in this setting. If people are not able to get along and resolve conflicts, the organization as a whole will be less productive, which could affect profitability. Many organizations **empower**[3] their employees; that is, they give employees freedom in making decisions about how their work gets done. This can create a more motivated

2. Refers to the way a company arranges people, jobs, and communications so that work can be performed.

3. When an organization gives the employees freedom in making decisions about how their work gets done.

workforce, which results in more positive human relations. We will explore this topic further in Chapter 6 "Understand Your Motivations".

Most organizations employ a **total person approach**[4]. This approach recognizes that an organization does not just employ someone with skills, but rather, the whole person. This person comes with biases, personal challenges, human relations skills, and technical skills but also comes with experiences. By looking at a person from this perspective, an organization can begin to understand that what happens to an employee outside of work can affect his or her job performance. For example, assume Kathy is doing a great job at work but suddenly starts to arrive late, leave early, and take longer lunches. Upon further examination, we might find that Kathy is having childcare issues because of her divorce. Because of a total person approach perspective, her organization might be able to rearrange her schedule or work with her to find a reasonable solution. This relates to human relations because we are not just people going to work every day; we are people who live our personal lives, and one affects the other. Because of this, our human relations abilities will most certainly be affected if we are experiencing challenges at home or at work.

Smile	Be sincere	Be the bearer of good news	Be a positive person	Make people happy	Use proper body language	Expose yourself more
People tend to be attracted to those who seem friendly.	Be real, be yourself	Give people positive news as often as possible	Always look for the brighter side	Be pleasant company	Use nonverbal clues to indicate your interest in someone else	The more someone sees you or communicates with you, the more they will grow to like you

Joan Harrington, a blogger and life coach, says there are a few key things to getting people to like you. Joan Harrington, "Eight Persuasion Tips to Make Anyone Like You," Joan Harrington's True Successes, January 19, 2012, accessed January 31, 2012, http://joansblog.joantruesuccess11.ws/highly-recommended/8-persuasion-tips-to-make-anyone-like-you/

Evolution of Human Relations Study

Human relations, however, was not always central to the conversation on organizational success. In fact, until the 1940s, little thought was given to the human aspect of jobs. Many of the jobs in the early 1900s were focused on production and located in factory-like settings where the jobs themselves were repetitive. The focus in these types of work environments was on efficiency. We can call this time period of human relations studies the **classical school of management**[5]. This school of thought took place from 1900 to the early 1920s. Several theories were developed, which revolved around the idea of efficiency, or getting a job done with the least amount of steps.

4. This approach recognizes that an organization employs not just someone with skills but rather the whole person.

5. A time period relating to the research of human relations that focused on efficiency. The time period for this school of thought took place from 1900 to the early 1920s.

Frederick W. Taylor was an engineer who today is known as the father of scientific management. He began his career in a steel company and, because of his intimate knowledge of the industry, believed that organizations could analyze tasks to make them performed with more efficiency.

Following his work, Frank and Lillian Gilbreth performed numerous studies on physical motions workers took to perform specific tasks and tried to maximize efficiency by suggesting new ways to perform the tasks, using less energy and thereby being more efficient.

While Taylor and Gilbreth's research was more focused on physical motions and tasks, Henri Fayol began looking at how management could improve productivity instead of focusing on specific tasks and motions. Fayol created the Fourteen Principles of Management, which focused on management but also hinted to the importance of human relations:Girish Sharmaa, "Henri Fayol's Principles of Management," Publish Your Articles, no date, accessed February 1, 2012, http://www.publishyourarticles.org/knowledge-hub/business-studies/henry-fayols-principles-of-management.html

1. **Division of work.** Work should be divided in the most efficient way. Fayol believed work specialization, or the focus on specific tasks for teams or individuals, to be crucial to success.
2. **Authority.** Authority is the right to give orders and accountability within those orders. Fayol believed that along with giving orders and expecting them to be met, that person in authority also assumes responsibility to make sure tasks are met.
3. **Discipline.** Discipline is penalties applied to encourage common effort, as a successful organization requires the common effort of all workers.
4. **Unity of command.** Workers should receive orders from only one manager. In other words, reporting to two or more managers would violate Fayol's Fourteen Principles of Management.
5. **Unity of direction.** Everyone in the organization should move toward a common goal and understand how the team will achieve that goal.
6. **Subordination of individual interests to general interests.** The interests of one person shouldn't have priority over the interests of the organization as a whole. This focuses on teamwork and the importance of everyone acting toward the same goal.
7. **Remuneration.** Many things should be considered when paying employees, including cost of living, supply of qualified people, and business success.
8. **Centralization.** The degree of importance in the subordinates' (employees') role in their organization and the amount of decision making that occurs at a central level versus a decentralized level. For

example, in many organizations decisions are made centrally (i.e., in the "corporate office"), which does not allow as much flexibility as decentralized decision making; this would mean each individual area can make its own decisions.

9. **Scalar chain.** This refers to how authority is divided among managers. Specifically, Fayol said lower-level managers should always keep upper-level managers informed.
10. **Order.** All materials and people related to one kind of work should be organized and neat. Things should be easy to find.
11. **Equity.** All employees should be treated equally.
12. **Stability of tenure of personnel.** Retention of employees should be a high management priority. The cost of hiring a new worker is expensive, so efforts should be maintained to keep current employees.
13. **Initiative.** Management should take steps to encourage workers to take initiative. In addition, workers should be self-directed and not need a lot of management control to accomplish tasks.
14. **Esprit de corps.** Managers should encourage harmony among employees. This harmony creates good feelings among employees.

Fayol's research was some of the first that addressed the need for positive human relations in a work environment. As further research was performed into the 1920s, we moved into a new period of human relations studies called the **behavioral school of management**[6]. During this time period, employees had begun to unionize, bringing human relations issues to the forefront. Because workers demanded a more humane environment, researchers began to look at how organizations could make this happen.

One of the more notable researchers was Elton Mayo, from Harvard Business School, and his colleagues. They conducted a series of experiments from the mid-1920s to early 1930s to investigate how physical working conditions affected worker productivity. They found that regardless of changes such as heat, lighting, hours, and breaks, productivity levels increased during the study. The researchers realized the increased productivity resulted because the workers knew they were being observed. In other words, the workers worked harder because they were receiving attention and felt cared about. This phenomenon is called the **Hawthorne effect**[7] (named for the electrical plant for which the experiments were conducted).

In the 1950s, researchers began to explore management techniques and the effect on worker satisfaction. This was called the **behavioral science approach**[8]. These techniques used psychology, sociology, and other human relations aspects to help researchers understand the organizational environment.

6. During the 1920s when employees had begun to unionize, researchers began to look at the human aspect of workers.

7. Coined during the 1920s during a series of experiments where workers had higher productivity because they were being watched by researchers and felt cared about.

8. During the 1950s when researchers began to explore management techniques as opposed to earlier years where the focus was more on productivity.

Since the 1960s, research on human relations has been much easier to assimilate because of technology and a focus on statistical analysis. Hence, this is called the **management science school**[9]. So while research today focuses on the human relations aspect, we are now able to use complex statistical models to improve efficiency and productivity while still focusing on the human relations component.

Human Relations, Technology, and Globalization

While we discuss the impact of technology on human relations throughout the book, it is important to mention here the immense impact technology has had on this field of study. Inability to see body language indicators make it more difficult to communicate using technology, creating conflict and misunderstandings. These misunderstandings can obviously affect human relations. Also consider that through globalization, we are working with people from all over the world in many time zones who have different perspectives. Between technology and globalization, humans have never had to work with such a diverse group of people—using diverse methods of communication—at any time in history.

Technology has allowed us to do this: e-mail, Skype, and instant message, to name a few. The impact on human relations is obvious—there is less face-to-face interactions and more interactions using technology. Add in the challenge of a global environment and this creates a whole new set of challenges.

Many organizations today are focusing on how to use technology to save workers time commuting to work. In fact, an estimated 26.2 million workers **telecommute**[10], or work from a remote location at least once per month.Telework 2011, "A WorldatWork Special Report," World at Work Organization, June 2011, accessed February 1, 2012, http://www.worldatwork.org/waw/adimLink?id=53034 Global Workplace Analytics cites the following benefits to telecommuting:

1. Improved employee satisfaction
2. Reduced unscheduled absences
3. Increased productivity

However, Global Workplace Analytics also says there are some key drawbacks:Telework Research Network, "Costs and Benefits: Advantages of Telecommuting," Telework Research Network, no date, accessed February 1, 2012, http://www.teleworkresearchnetwork.com/costs-benefits

1. Social needs may not be met
2. People must be self-directed

9. During the 1960s when the research on human relations was more focused on statistical aspects, due to the increase in technology.

10. The practice of working from a remote location.

3. Employees must be comfortable with technology or it won't work

While technology has greatly impacted human relations at work, there are some common denominators for human relations success in today's workplace—whether or not technology is used. These factors will be discussed throughout this book:

- Chapter 1 "What Is Human Relations?". Understanding how personality, attitudes, self-esteem, and perception impact human relations. How we are, how we behave, and our belief systems all impact how we view ourselves and others.
- Chapter 2 "Achieve Personal Success". Understanding the components to personal success, such as goal setting and emotional intelligence skills. Being able to achieve personal success is the first step in attaining career success.
- Chapter 3 "Manage Your Stress". Managing stress and understanding how too much stress can negatively impact our human relations.
- Chapter 4 "Communicate Effectively". Communication abilities. Everything we do at work and in our personal lives involves communication. Understanding how to communicate effectively is the cornerstone of positive human relations.
- Chapter 5 "Be Ethical at Work". Ethical decision making is necessary because ethical decisions must be made all the time in our personal and work lives. Understanding how to make an ethical decision can help us become better employees and human beings.
- Chapter 6 "Understand Your Motivations". Understanding what motivates you can help you know the right career path and can assist you in guiding your supervisor. Without an understanding of our own motivations (our own self-knowledge) we may not be able to complete tasks as efficiently. Of course, this skill is the key to successful human relations.
- Chapter 7 "Work Effectively in Groups". Working in teams has become necessary in most every work environment. Understanding how teams work and how they achieve success together will provide you with the tools to be an effective team member.
- Chapter 8 "Make Good Decisions". Good decision making, both personally and professionally, can help our human relations in that it provides a framework to make sure we are thinking about all aspects of the decision. We tend to be happier when we make better decisions, which means we relate better to others.
- Chapter 9 "Handle Conflict and Negotiation". The ability to manage conflict is necessary in today's workplace. Not everything will work exactly as we planned, nor will we get along with everyone we meet.

Learning how to work through these challenges can help us become better at human relations.

- Chapter 10 "Manage Diversity at Work". The ability to work with a diverse workforce. In a globalized workforce, we will work with people from all cultures and backgrounds. Understanding how to effectively work with people different from us can help us be more successful at work.

- Chapter 11 "Work with Labor Unions". Understanding labor unions and their role in the workplace will help us understand how unions work, should we become employed in a union environment. Understanding the concepts in this chapter gives us the working knowledge to apply the human relations skills we have learned.

- Chapter 12 "Be a Leader". Leadership and management skills can assist us in understanding how we can be leaders in our workplace, even if we do not have a formal title.

- Chapter 13 "Manage Your Career". Managing one's own career, such as etiquette, dealing with change, and networking. This capstone chapter will relate our discussion back to these key components to human relations.

We will focus on human relations in a work setting, but many examples will also relate to personal settings. The examples provided will give you tools to have positive relationships with coworkers, supervisors, and people in your personal life. These positive relationships—both at home and at work—help us become more rounded, happier individuals. This is good for everyone, including the company you work for.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *Human relations* is an important part to our career success. It is defined as relations with or between people, particularly in a workplace setting. Because a company depends on good human relations through its organizational structure, developing these skills is important.
- Technology has greatly impacted human relations because so much of our communication occurs without the advantage of seeing body language. This can result in miscommunications. Many workers *telecommute* to work. There are advantages and disadvantages, more notably a disadvantage being the lack of human, face-to-face contact.
- There was an evolution in human relations study. In the *classical school of management*, the focus was on efficiency and not on human relations.
- Employees began to unionize in the 1920s due to lack of positive human relations, and therefore the *behavioral school of management* was created. During this time period, researchers began to focus on the human relations aspect of the workplace. One of the major theories developed was the *Hawthorne effect*, which determined that workers were more productive when they were being watched and cared about by researchers.
- During the 1950s, the *behavioral science approach* looked at management techniques as a way to increase productivity and human relations.
- In the 1960s and beyond, sophisticated tools allow researchers to analyze more data and focus on the statistical aspects of human relations and management data.

EXERCISES

1. Have you ever worked with anyone like Jenny (in the opening case), either in school or at a job? Discuss your experiences and how you handled working with this person. How could they have benefited from an understanding of human relations?
2. Discuss two advantages to learning about human relations skills. Why do companies value good human relations skills?
3. Would you be interested in telecommuting for work? What are the advantages and disadvantages to the employee? Discuss in small groups.
4. Draw a timeline of human relations research. On the timeline, indicate the events that changed human relations thinking. Bring your timelines to class and discuss in small groups.

1.2 Human Relations: Personality and Attitude Effects

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Be able to define personality and attitudes.
2. Explain how your attitude and personality has an effect in the workplace.
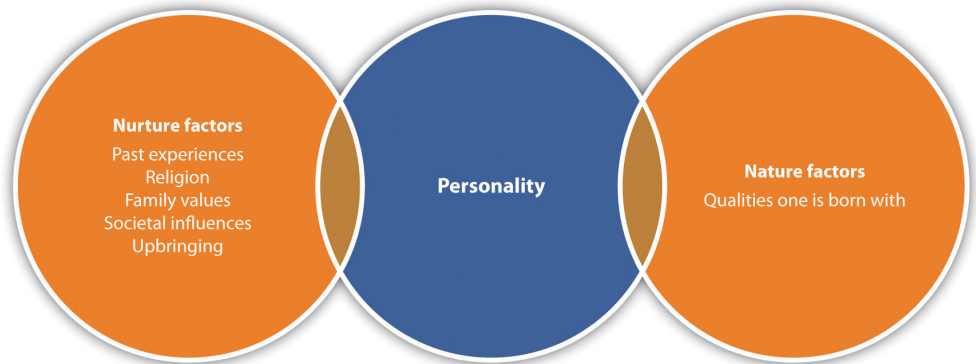

What Determines Our Personality?

Our **personality**[11] is defined as a set of traits that can explain or predict a person's behavior in a variety of situations. In other words, personality is a set of characteristics that reflect the way we think and act in a given situation. Because of this, our personality has a lot to do with how we relate to one another at work. How we think, what we feel, and our normal behavior characterize what our colleagues come to expect of us both in behavior and the expectation of their interactions with us. For example, let's suppose at work you are known for being on time but suddenly start showing up late daily. This directly conflicts with your personality—that is, the fact that you are conscientious. As a result, coworkers might start to believe something is wrong. On the other hand, if you did not have this characteristic, it might not be as surprising or noteworthy. Likewise, if your normally even-tempered supervisor yells at you for something minor, you may believe there is something more to his or her anger since this isn't a normal personality trait and also may have a more difficult time handling the situation since you didn't expect it. When we come to expect someone to act a certain way, we learn to interact with them based on their personality. This goes both ways, and people learn to interact with us based on our personality. When we behave different than our normal personality traits, people may take time to adjust to the situation.

Personality also affects our ability to interact with others, which can impact our career success. In a 2009 studyAngelina R. Sutin and Paul T. Costa, "Personality and Career Success," *European Journal of Personality* 23, no. 2 (March 2009): 71–84. by Angelina Sutin et al., it was found that the personality characteristic of neuroticism (a tendency to experience negative emotional states) had more effect than any personality characteristic on determining future career success. In other words, those with positive and hopeful personalities tend to be rewarded through career success later in life.

11. A set of traits that can explain or predict a person's behavior in variety of situations.

Although there is debate between whether or not our personalities are inherent when we are born (nature) versus the way we grew up (nurture), most researchers agree that personality is usually a result of both nature and our environmental/ education experiences. For example, you have probably heard someone say, "She acts just like her mother." She likely behaves that way because she was born with some of her mother's traits, as well as because she learned some of the behaviors her mother passed to her while growing up.

Figure 1.1

Nature and nurture factors determine our personality.

Another example might be someone who grows up with their parents constantly having parties. As a result, as an adult this person may end up organizing a lot of parties, too. Or the influence of parties may create the opposite effect, where the person doesn't want to have parties at all. The environmental and educational experiences can create positive or negative associations, which result in how we feel about any situation that occurs in our lives.Alexandria Lupu, "Our Personality: Is It Genetically Inherited or Determined by the Environmental Factors," Softpedia News, July 2, 2006, accessed February 3, 2012, http://news.softpedia.com/news/ Our-Personality-Is-It-Genetically-Inherited-or-Determined-by-The-Environmental-Factors-28413.shtml

Our values help determine our personality. Our **values**[12] are those things we find most important to us. For example, if your value is calmness and peace, your personality would show this in many possible ways. You might prefer to have a few close friends and avoid going to a nightclub on Saturday nights. You might choose a less stressful career path, and you might find it challenging to work in a place where frequent conflict occurs.

12. The things we find most important to us.

We often find ourselves in situations where our values do not coincide with someone we are working with. For example, if Alison's main value is connection, this may come out in a warm communication style with coworkers and an interest in their personal lives. Imagine Alison works with Tyler, whose core value is efficiency. Because of Tyler's focus, he may find it a waste of time to make small talk with colleagues. When Alison approaches Tyler and asks about his weekend, she may feel offended or upset when he brushes her off to ask about the project they are working on together. She feels like a connection wasn't made, and he feels like she isn't efficient. Understanding our own values as well as the values of others can greatly help us become better communicators.

Examples of Values

What are your top five values? How do you think this affects your personality?

Accomplishment, success	Ease of use	Meaning	Results-oriented
Accountability	Efficiency	Justice	Rule of law
Accuracy	Enjoyment	Kindness	Safety
Adventure	Equality	Knowledge	Satisfying others
All for one & one for all	Excellence	Leadership	Security
Beauty	Fairness	Love, romance	Self-givingness
Calm, quietude, peace	Faith	Loyalty	Self-reliance
Challenge	Faithfulness	Maximum utilization	Self-thinking
Change	Family	Intensity (of time, resources)	Sensitivity
Charity	Family feeling	Merit	Service (to others, society)
Cleanliness, orderliness	Flair	Money	Simplicity
Collaboration	Freedom, liberty	Oneness	Skill
Commitment	Friendship	Openness	Solving problems
Communication	Fun	Other's point of view, inputs	Speed
Community	Generosity	Patriotism	Spirit, spirituality in life
Competence	Gentleness	Peace, nonviolence	Stability

Competition	Global view	Perfection	Standardization
Concern for others	Goodwill	Personal growth	Status
Connection	Goodness	Perseverance	Strength
Content over form	Gratitude	Pleasure	A will to perform
Continuous improvement	Hard work	Power	Success, achievement
Cooperation	Happiness	Practicality	Systemization
Coordination	Harmony	Preservation	Teamwork
Creativity	Health	Privacy	Timeliness
Customer satisfaction	Honor	Progress	Tolerance
Decisiveness	Human-centered	Prosperity, wealth	Tradition
Determination	Improvement	Punctuality	Tranquility
Delight of being, joy	Independence	Quality of work	Trust
Democracy	Individuality	Regularity	Truth
Discipline	Inner peace, calm, quietude	Reliability	Unity
Discovery	Innovation	Resourcefulness	Variety
Diversity	Integrity	Respect for others	Well-being
Dynamism	Intelligence	Responsiveness	Wisdom

Source: http://www.gurusoftware.com/GuruNet/Personal/Topics/Values.htm

What about Our Attitudes?

13. Favorable or unfavorable feelings toward people, things, or situations.

Our **attitudes**[13] are favorable or unfavorable opinions toward people, things, or situations. Many things affect our attitudes, including the environment we were brought up in and our individual experiences. Our personalities and values play a large role in our attitudes as well. For example, many people may have attitudes

toward politics that are similar to their parents, but their attitudes may change as they gain more experiences. If someone has a bad experience around the ocean, they may develop a negative attitude around beach activities. However, assume that person has a memorable experience seeing sea lions at the beach, for example, then he or she may change their opinion about the ocean. Likewise, someone may have loved the ocean, but if they have a scary experience, such as nearly drowning, they may change their attitude.

The important thing to remember about attitudes is that they can change over time, but usually some sort of positive experience needs to occur for our attitudes to change dramatically for the better. We also have control of our attitude in our thoughts. If we constantly stream negative thoughts, it is likely we may become a negative person.

In a workplace environment, you can see where attitude is important. Someone's personality may be cheerful and upbeat. These are the prized employees because they help bring positive perspective to the workplace. Likewise, someone with a negative attitude is usually someone that most people prefer not to work with. The problem with a negative attitude is that it has a devastating effect on everyone else. Have you ever felt really happy after a great day and when you got home, your roommate was in a terrible mood because of her bad day? In this situation, you can almost feel yourself deflating! This is why having a positive attitude is a key component to having good human relations at work and in our personal lives.

But how do we change a negative attitude? Because a negative attitude can come from many sources, there are also many sources that can help us improve our attitude.

Changing Your Attitude

On the Motivation123 website, they describe the three things to consider when trying to change your attitude.

Reams are written about improving your attitude; not so when it comes to defining that thing you're trying to improve. In this checklist, we're going to fix that.

Though there are many ways to define attitude, I find the three checkpoints below to be the most helpful. They make it clear not only what your attitude is made of but also how it affects what you do.

1. How You Enter

Before heading down South for a vacation, I expected a relaxing and enjoyable time. This is the first piece of your attitude: it is what you expect before something happens.

For me, I expected good things. Someone with a more negative bent—at least in relation to traveling—would predict rough times ahead.

2. How You Live through It

The second piece of your attitude is the way in which you gauge progress. Do you notice what is going wrong? Going well? Somewhere in between?

I went to dinner the other night with a few friends. I'm always on the lookout for stories to use on the site, so when they started to comment on the place, I was drawn in. One friend noticed how noisy the restaurant was, how grumpy the waiter seemed, and how bad the food tasted.

On the heels of this cheery testimonial, the friend sitting next to me said she loved the atmosphere, the style of the tables, and her dinner. Two attitudes looking for very different things.

3. How You Exit

The last role your attitude plays happens at the end of a situation or experience. At this point, your attitude affects the way you sum things up.

I was watching a competition-based reality show the other night and, when two people were sent home, they were given the chance to talk to the camera one last time.

They were asked what they would take away from the experience. The first reflected on the friendships he had made and the good times he had had. The second was angry and vengeful. To her, the experience was a waste of time. Attitude strikes again.

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As Note 1.19 "Changing Your Attitude" points out, our attitude is ultimately about how we set our expectations; how we handle the situation when our expectations are not met; and finally, how we sum up an experience, person, or situation. When we focus on improving our attitude on a daily basis, we get used to thinking positively and our entire personality can change. It goes without saying that employers prefer to hire and promote someone with a positive attitude as opposed to a negative one. Other tips for improving attitude include the following:Richard Whitaker, "Improving Your Attitude," Biznick, September 2, 2008, accessed February 3, 2012, http://biznik.com/articles/improving-your-attitude

1. When you wake up in the morning, decide you are going to have an excellent day. By having this attitude, it is less likely you may feel disappointed when small things do not go your way.
2. Be conscious of your negative thoughts. Keep a journal of negative thoughts. Upon reviewing them, analyze why you had a negative thought about a specific situation.
3. Try to avoid negative thinking. Think of a stop sign in your mind that stops you when you have negative thoughts. Try to turn those thoughts into positive ones. For example, instead of saying, "I am

terrible in math," say, "I didn't do well on that test. It just means I will study harder next time."

4. Spend time with positive people. All of us likely have a friend who always seems to be negative or a coworker who constantly complains. People like this can negatively affect our attitude, too, so steering clear when possible, or limiting the interaction time, is a great way to keep a positive attitude intact.

5. Spend time in a comfortable physical environment. If your mattress isn't comfortable and you aren't getting enough sleep, it is more difficult to have a positive attitude! Or if the light in your office is too dark, it might be more difficult to feel positive about the day. Look around and examine your physical space. Does it match the mental frame of mind you want to be in?

Self-Assessment: What's My Attitude?

1. People would describe me as unhappy.

    - ◦ True
    - ◦ False

2. I complain right away if there is something I don't like.

    - ◦ True
    - ◦ False

3. Being positive most of the time is far too unrealistic.

    - ◦ True
    - ◦ False

4. If I have a bad morning, the rest of my day is sure to be ruined.

    - ◦ True
    - ◦ False

5. I tend to think more about my weak points than my strong points.

    - ◦ True
    - ◦ False

6. I don't give out compliments because I don't want someone to get a big ego.

    - ◦ True
    - ◦ False

7. In the past two weeks, I have called myself depressed.

    - ◦ True
    - ◦ False

8. I worry too much about things I can't control.

    - ◦ True
    - ◦ False

9. It takes a lot to make me happy.

    - ◦ True

- ◦ False

10. When I experience a failure, I usually just stop trying.

   - ◦ True
   - ◦ False

Now, count the number of true and false answers. The more false answers you have, the better attitude you tend to have. If you have many true answers, what are some ways to help you change to a more positive attitude?

When considering our personality, values, and attitudes, we can begin to get the bigger picture of who we are and how our experiences affect how we behave at work and in our personal lives. It is a good idea to reflect often on what aspects of our personality are working well and which we might like to change. With self-awareness (discussed further in Chapter 2 "Achieve Personal Success"), we can make changes that eventually result in better human relations.

Why Human Relations?

Our personality traits, attitude, and self-esteem have everything to do with human relations. When you are planting a vegetable garden, you wouldn't fill the new garden with old soil that no longer has nutrients in it. Doing this will result in your plants not growing as large as they can or could even result in them not growing at all. If we look at our human relations ability, the same idea applies. **Personality, attitude, and self-esteem comprise the nutrient-rich soil required for our human relations skills to grow.** Our personality is how we see the world, either positive and full of hope or negative and full of despair. **Without a positive attitude, it can be difficult to relate to others—because they may not want to be around us!** Likewise, having a positive self-image can give us the confidence to nurture relationships, resulting in positive human relations as well. **Just like the garden that needs soils rich in nutrients, our human relations skills are the same.** To make our human relations skills grow, we need to look at our underlying personality characteristics, attitudes, and self-esteem that could be helping—or hindering—our ability to relate to others.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *Personality* is defined as a set of traits that predict and explain a person's behavior. Values are closely interwoven into personality, as our values often define our traits.
- Our personality can help define our *attitudes* toward specific things, situations, or people. Most people prefer to work with people who have a positive attitude.
- We can improve our attitude by waking up and believing that the day is going to be great. We can also keep awareness of our negative thoughts or those things that may prevent us from having a good day. Spending time with positive people can help improve our own attitude as well.

EXERCISES

1. Visit http://www.thecolorcode.com. Find the section that allows you to take the personality test for free, take the test, and then review the results. What color are you? How does this impact how you relate to others either at school or at work?
2. Looking at Note 1.17 "Examples of Values", which five are most important to you? Connect two to three personality traits you possess as a result of these values. For example, if you value practicality you might see this manifest through the importance placed on goods purchased or the type of wardrobe you have.
3. In two or three paragraphs, discuss your attitude and name four specific strategies you will use to improve your attitude.
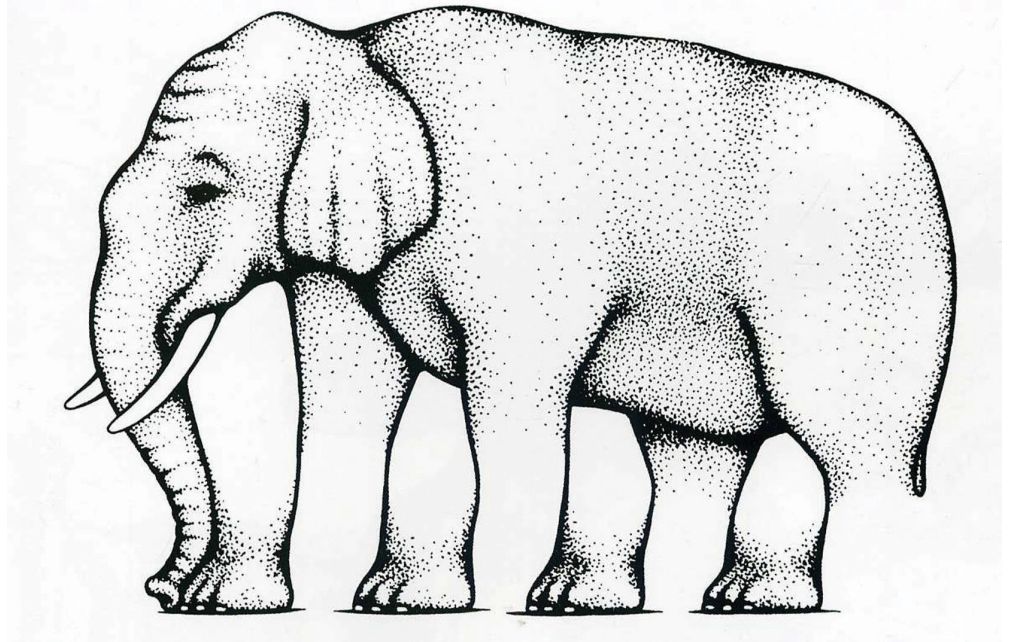
1.3 Human Relations: Perception's Effect

LEARNING OBJECTIVE
1. Be able to explain influencers of perception that impact your ability to relate to others.

Why Does Perception Matter to Human Relations?

As we have discussed so far in this chapter, many things impact our human relations with others. Perception is no different. **Perception**[14] is the recognition and interpretation of sensory stimuli based upon our memory. In other words, it is the way you interpret data around you. The data could come from sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing. For example, if you wake up in the morning to the smell of coffee, your perception is likely correct that your roommate is already awake. The challenge with perception in human relations is that we may not always understand someone else's perception and/or assume their perception is our own. This is where disagreements and other communication issues can occur. For example, if you perceive that your significant other is too focused on spending time with friends, your interactions with her will be based upon this perception. For example, you could be frustrated and short tempered. In a workplace setting, perceptions can also cause miscommunications. For example, you may perceive your coworker to be lazy because he always arrives to work at 8:15 a.m. and the start time is 8 a.m. Suppose he has a child with a medical condition who needs special schooling, and the school doesn't open until 8 a.m.? Perhaps he has made arrangements with your supervisor of which you are unaware. This perception can be a dangerous one, since we don't have all of the facts.

14. The recognition and interpretation of sensory stimuli based upon our memory.

How many legs does this elephant have? This section on perception is going to address the many ways we perceive things—and how these perceptions impact our ability to relate to others.

Source: *http://www.moillusions.com/2006/05/elephant-optical-illusion.html*

The Monkey Business Illusion

(click to see video)

Researcher and professor Dan Simons provides a short video that looks at our own perceptions.

What Influences Our Perception?

We have defined perception and given some example to show how perceptions can be incorrect—negatively impacting relationships. But where do our perceptions come from? There are a number of things that influence our perception.Rita Baltus, *Personal Psychology for Life and Work* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 27–29. First, our heredity can be major influencers of our perception. Height, skin color, and gender influence the way we see the world. For example, someone who is 5' 2" may perceive an object to be stored too high, while someone who is 6' 2" may not have that same perception.

Our needs impact our perception as well. Physiological needs, such as food and water (or lack thereof), can influence how we feel about certain situations. Have

you ever been in a social situation where you were very hungry? If so, you know this impacted your ability to socialize with other people. You may have found yourself less patient to listen because you were concerned about when you were going to eat! Or if you have ever taken a road trip and needed to use the restroom, your perception may be that the highway lacks a sufficient number of rest areas.

Our peer group can also impact our perception. Our peers tend to determine what is desirable or undesirable, thereby giving us information on how to interpret data around us. You have experienced this personally, no doubt. If you perceive a brand of clothing desirable, it is more likely your friends also feel similar. The same thing happens at work; for example, suppose a supervisor uses Skype to conduct meetings because her perception is that it is an efficient way to do business. It is highly likely that others in your workgroup will perceive it as a useful tool, also.

Our interests impact our perception. If you like running marathons, your perception on how much to spend on running shoes will be different from someone who prefers kayaking for fun and needs a pair of athletic shoes. Assume your interest at work is to be promoted. Your perception of work is very different than someone who can't stand the job and is looking for a position with a different company.

Our expectations are another driver of our perceptions. For example, research performed by Ronald MelzackRonald Melzack et al., "Central Neuropasticy and Pathological Pain," *Annals New York Academy of Sciences* 933 (2001): 157–59. suggests our expectations about how much something will hurt alters our perception after the fact. For example, if you are dreading getting a flu shot because you believe it will hurt a lot (expectations), once you actually have it done, you may say, "That didn't hurt at all" (perception), because your expectation prepared you beforehand. In other words, our expectations affect our perception after the fact. In this example, our expectation was extreme pain, but when that didn't occur, our perception was quite the opposite. Our expectations and resulting perception can also be looked at in a work setting. For example, if you have high expectations that your workgroup will win the annual chili cook-off at your company picnic, but you don't win, your perception could be one of unfairness: "The judges like the marketing department better." Likewise, if your team wins the chili cook-off and you expected to win, your perceptions may be, "Of course we won, we knew ours was the best."

15. Assumes that if a person has one trait we like, that all traits must be desirable.

16. If we find an undesirable trait in someone, we assume all traits are undesirable.

A **halo effect**[15] or **reverse halo effect**[16] can also alter our perceptions. The halo affect assumes that if a person has one trait we like, that all traits must be desirable. The reverse halo effect is if we find an undesirable trait in someone, we assume all traits are undesirable. Assume you don't like the way your coworker, Mariette,

speaks. You may then make an assumption that all of Mariette's traits are negative. Likewise, if you believe Rhonda is a great dental hygienist, you may promote her to manage the other dental hygienists. Later, if the other hygienists complain about her management style, you may realize you promoted her because you thought her skill as a dental hygienist meant she also had good management skills. In this case, the halo effect occurred.

Awareness of our own perceptions and what drives those perceptions is a key component to being successful at work. If we know why we believe something to be good, right, fair, negative, or unfair based on our perceptions, we can begin to let go of some of our misperceptions. As a result, developing good relationships at work, respect, and mutual understanding can create a better workplace.

Old Women/Young Women

(click to see video)

The classic optical illusion that shows our perceptions can be very different from other's perceptions. Do you see an old woman or a young woman in this picture?

<div>

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *Personality* is defined as a stable set of traits that can explain or predict a person's behavior in a variety of situations. Our personality affects the way we interact with others. Our personality comes from both environmental factors and some factors we are just born with (nature).
- *Values* are the things we find important to us. If our values conflict with another's, there may be a miscommunication or other issues.
- *Attitudes* can be favorable or unfavorable feelings toward people, things, or situations. Our attitudes have a great impact on each other. If one person has a bad attitude, it is likely to be contagious. We can do many things to change our attitude, but all include making a conscious effort to be aware of our negative thoughts and feelings.
- *Perception* refers to how we interpret stimuli such as people, things, or events. Our perception is important to recognize because it is the driving force behind our reaction to things.
- Heredity, needs, peer group, interests, and expectations all influence our perception. A *halo effect* or *reverse halo effect* can also influence our perception.

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EXERCISES

1. In groups, discuss a situation where you have experienced the halo or reverse halo effect. What was the outcome of the situation?
2. Think of at least five perceptions you had today. What influenced those perceptions? Were your perceptions correct?
3. In groups, discuss a school, personal, or work situation where your perception was wrong. What was the outcome?

1.4 Human Relations: Self-Esteem and Self-Confidence Effects

What Is Self-Esteem, Self-Image, and Projection?

Self-esteem[17] is the opinion you have of yourself and your perception on your value as a person. Low (negative) self-esteem can cause people to be negative, lack motivation, and be moody. Those with higher (positive) self-esteem like themselves, so they expect others to like them, too. They don't harshly judge themselves and are comfortable with who they are.

Self-confidence[18], on the other hand, is your belief in yourself and your abilities. Often, people with high self-esteem also have self-confidence, although this may not always be the case. Both self-esteem and self-confidence can translate to positive human relations because if a person feels good about himself or herself, it is more likely he or she will be more comfortable communicating and working in teams—key components for success. According to researchers George Hollenbeck and Douglas Hall,George Hollenbeck and Douglas Hall, "Self-Confidence and Leader Performance" (technical report, Boston University Executive Development Roundtable, 2004). self-confidence can come from several sources:

1. **Actual experience.** When you have accomplished something and succeeded, it is likely you will have the self-confidence to be successful at the task again.
2. **Experiences of others.** If you watch another person perform a task, you may know you can do the same thing.
3. **Social comparison.** When we see others with similar abilities able to perform a task, we may feel more confident in our own abilities to perform the same task.
4. **Social persuasion.** A boost in self-confidence can come from the encouragement of someone we trust.
5. **Emotional arousal.** This refers to our inner feelings of being adequate or inadequate when it comes to accomplishing a certain task. This can come from negative or positive self-talk.

17. The opinion you have for yourself and your value as a person.

18. Your belief in yourself and your abilities.

Self-efficacy[19] is the confidence you have to carry out a specific task. Someone may have generally lower self-confidence but have self-efficacy in certain areas of his or her life. For example, Michael may have low self-esteem in general, but he is a computer whiz so he has self-efficacy in his ability to rebuild a computer.

Self-image[20] is a bit different than self-esteem in that it means how an individual thinks others view him or her. One's self-image may not always be in line with what people actually think, but you can imagine the impact this can have on human relations at work. If someone's self-image is that people think they are stupid, they may not try as hard since they believe this is what people think of them anyway. Obviously, this can be an unproductive and unhealthy way of working with others.

Projection[21] refers to how your self-esteem is reflected in the way you treat others. For example, if Cheng has low self-esteem, he may project this by putting down other people or belittling them. Likewise, if Cheng has high self-esteem, his projection onto others may be positive.

Improving Self-Confidence

Even if our self-confidence needs improvement, the good news is that there are many ways we can improve it. The following are examples:

Self-esteem can come in many ways, some more obvious than others, such as winning an award.

© Thinkstock

1. **Use positive self-talk and visual imagery.** Self-talk refers to the things we tell ourselves in quiet moments. It could be, "I did a really good job on that project" or "I am not good in math." We constantly have an internal dialogue and our subconscious does not know the difference between truth and reality. So when we use negative self-talk, our subconscious actually starts to believe whatever we are telling it! This is why it is important to use positive self-talk. Visual imagery is focusing on a positive outcome and imagining it. By focusing on a positive outcome, we begin to believe it, thereby making it more likely to happen. For example, before you swing a golf club, you may imagine yourself hitting it perfectly with the ball going in just the right direction. This helps get us mentally ready to perform.

19. The confidence you have to carry out a specific task.

20. How an individual thinks others view him or her.

21. Refers to how your self-esteem is reflected in the way you treat others.

2. **Take risks.** Risk-taking is an important source of gaining self-confidence. Of course, not all risks work out the way we want them to, but until we take risks, we are unable to accomplish tasks.

3. **Accomplish.** Accomplishing something important such as earning a degree or a promotion can help us gain self-confidence. Of course, as mentioned earlier, often it involves risk taking in order to accomplish.

4. **Know your strengths and weaknesses.** Everyone has a set of things they are good at. Knowing what you are good at and focusing on those things can improve self-esteem. Also, knowing what you are not good at and working to improve those skills can build self-confidence, too.

5. **Choose to spend time with people who boost your self-esteem.** There are many negative people who do not want anyone to succeed because it makes them feel bad about themselves. Choose friends who boost your self-esteem and limit the time with people who harm your self-esteem.

Everyone can continue working on their self-esteem and self-confidence throughout life. The **Johari window**[22] is one tool that can help us determine how we see ourselves and how others see us. This can serve as a good starting point and self-assessment tool to help us become better at human relations.

22. A tool that can help us determine how we see ourselves and how others see us.

23. In the Johari window, the area that the person knows about themselves and others know about them.

24. In the Johari window, the area the person doesn't know about themselves but others know about them.

25. In the Johari window, the area the person knows about themselves, but others do not know about them.

26. In the Johari window, the area that neither the person nor others know.

The Johari window was created in 1955 by Josephy Luft and Harry Ingham. When it was created, the researchers gave people fifty-six adjectives they could use to describe themselves. The subjects picked five or six adjectives and then had someone who knew them well pick six for that person as well. Then, the adjectives were placed in the appropriate place in the grid. The grid consists of four windows. The first window is the **open area**[23]. In this area, these are things that someone knows about themselves and others see in them too. The second window is the **blind area**[24]. In the blind area, the person does not know it about themselves, but others see it in them. In the **hidden area**[25], the person knows this about her- or himself, but others are not aware of it. In the **unknown area**[26], neither person knows what exists there. Through time and as we change and grow, we may have more self-awareness and aspects of ourselves once in the unknown area may go into one of the other windows.

Figure 1.2 *The Johari Window*

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known to others	Arena	Blind spot
Not known to others	Façade	Unknown

Having higher self-esteem and higher self-confidence can improve our projection, meaning we can better accept criticism, learn from our mistakes, and communicate more effectively. This can result in better human relations at work and, ultimately, higher productivity and higher profitability.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- *Self-esteem* is defined as the opinion one has about their value as a person. This is different than *self-confidence*, which refers to the belief someone has in themselves. Both are important determinants to career and human relations success.
- *Self-efficacy* is the confidence someone has to carry out a specific task. Self-confidence and self-efficacy can come from a variety of sources.
- *Self-image* is how you think others view you, while *projection* refers to how your self-esteem is reflected in others.
- The *Johari window* is a tool to look at our own self-esteem and learn how others view us. The Johari window involves the *open area, hidden area, blind area*, and *unknown area*.

EXERCISES

1. Write down the five words that describe you the best. When you look at these words, are they positive? If they are not positive, what steps can you take to improve your self-esteem? How will the steps you take improve your human relations skills?
2. Take the self-esteem quiz at http://testyourself.psychtests.com/testid/3102. What were the results? Do you agree with the results?

1.5 Summary and Exercise

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- *Human relations* is an important part to our career success. It is defined as relations with or between people, particularly in a workplace setting. Because a company depends on good human relations through its organizational structure, developing these skills is important.
- Technology has greatly impacted human relations because so much of our communication occurs without the advantage of seeing body language. This can result in miscommunications. Many workers *telecommute* to work. There are advantages and disadvantages, a more notable disadvantage being the lack of human, face-to-face contact.
- There was an evolution in human relations study. In the *classical school of management*, the focus was on efficiency and not on human relations.
- Employees began to unionize in the 1920s due to lack of positive human relations, and therefore the *behavioral school of management* was created. During this time period, researchers began to focus on the human relations aspect of the workplace. One of the major theories developed was the *Hawthorne effect*, which determined that workers were more productive when they were being watched and cared about by researchers.
- During the 1950s, the *behavioral science approach* looked at management techniques as a way to increase productivity and human relations.
- In the 1960s and beyond, sophisticated tools allow researchers to analyze more data and focus on the statistical aspects of human relations and management data.
- *Personality* is defined as a stable set of traits that can explain or predict a person's behavior in a variety of situations. Our personality affects the way we interact with others. Our personality comes from both environmental factors and some factors we are just born with (nature).
- *Values* are the things we find important to us. If our values conflict with another's, there may be a miscommunication or other issues.
- *Attitudes* can be favorable or unfavorable feelings toward people, things, or situations. Our attitudes have a great impact on each other. If one person has a bad attitude, it is likely to be contagious. We can do many things to change our attitude, but all include making a conscious effort to be aware of our negative thoughts and feelings.
- *Perception* refers to how we interpret stimuli such as people, things, or events. Our perception is important to recognize because it is the driving force behind our reaction to things.
- Heredity, needs, peer group, interests, and expectations all influence our perception. A *halo effect* or *reverse halo effect* can also influence our perception.

- *Self-esteem* is defined as the opinion one has about their value as a person. This is different than *self-confidence*, which refers to the belief someone has in themselves. Both are important determinants to career and human relations success.
- *Self-efficacy* is the confidence someone has to carry out a specific task. Self-confidence and self-efficacy can come from a variety of sources.
- *Self-image* is how you think others view you, while *projection* refers to how your self-esteem is reflected in others.
- The *Johari window* is a tool to look at our own self-esteem and learn how others view us. The Johari window involves the *open area*, *hidden area*, *blind area*, and *unknown area*.
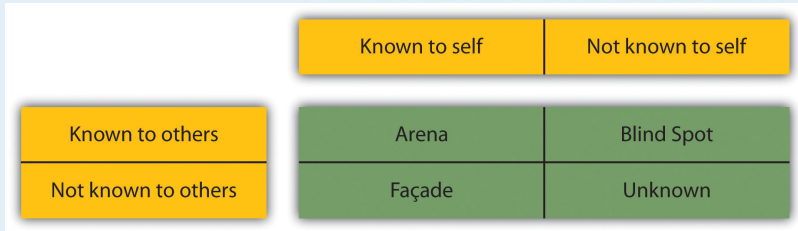
CHAPTER EXERCISE

1. Using the following adjectives, please select five to six that best describe you. Once you have done this, have someone who knows you well select five to six adjectives. Compare those you selected to those your friend selected, and then place in the appropriate window of Johari's model, the open area, blind area, unknown area, or hidden area. Then answer the following questions:

   a. What surprised you most about the adjectives your friend chose?
   b. What are some ways you can make your hidden area more open? What are the advantages to doing this?
   c. How do you think this exercise relates to your self-esteem?
   d. How can the information you gained about yourself apply to positive human relations?

simple	brash	vulgar	unimaginative	violent
withdrawn	childish	unhappy	irrational	insecure
cynical	impatient	inane	imperceptive	hostile
boastful	panicky	distant	loud	needy
weak	smug	chaotic	self-satisfied	ignorant
unethical	predictable	vacuous	overdramatic	blasé
rash	foolish	passive	unreliable	embarrassed
callous	patient	dull	dependable	insensitive
humorless	powerful	intelligent	dignified	dispassionate
sensible	proud	introverted	energetic	inattentive
sentimental	quiet	kind	extroverted	able
shy	reflective	knowledgeable	friendly	accepting
silly	relaxed	logical	giving	adaptable
spontaneous	religious	loving	happy	bold
sympathetic	responsive	mature	helpful	brave
tense	searching	modest	idealistic	calm

trustworthy	self-assertive	nervous	independent	caring
warm	self-conscious	observant	ingenious	cheerful
wise	cowardly	organized	inflexible	clever
witty	irresponsible	timid	glum	complex
intolerant	selfish	unhelpful	aloof	confident

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known to others	Arena	Blind Spot
Not known to others	Façade	Unknown

The Johari Window