

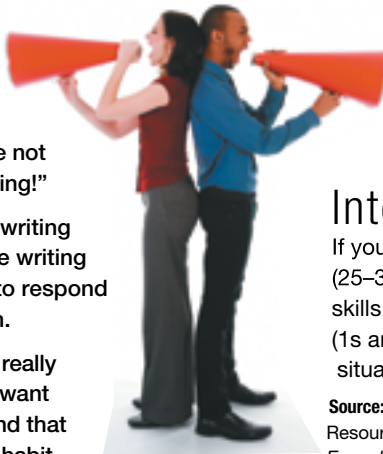
Assess yourself

How Well Do You Communicate?

Imagine that you are in each of the situations below, and indicate how confident and satisfied you are that you could communicate competently using the following scale.

1. Very dissatisfied with my ability to communicate
2. Somewhat dissatisfied with my ability to communicate
3. Not sure how effectively I could communicate
4. Somewhat satisfied that I could communicate competently
5. Very satisfied that I could communicate competently

- _____ 1. Someone asks you personal questions that you feel uncomfortable answering. You'd like to tell the person that you don't want to answer.
- _____ 2. You think a friend is drinking more alcohol than is healthy, and you want to bring it up with her.
- _____ 3. Your colleague asks you to write him a letter of recommendation. You don't think he is well suited for the position to which he's applying.
- _____ 4. During a heated discussion about social issues, the person with whom you are talking says, "You're not listening to anything I'm saying!"
- _____ 5. A friend shares his creative writing with you. You don't think the writing is very good, but you need to respond to his request for an opinion.
- _____ 6. Your roommate's habits are really getting on your nerves. You want to tell her you're bothered and that you'd like her to change the habit.



- _____ 7. You arrive at a party and discover that you don't know anyone there.
- _____ 8. A classmate asks you for notes for the classes he missed, but you realize he has missed half the classes and expects you to bail him out.
- _____ 9. The person you have been dating declares, "I love you." You care about her, but you don't love her, at least not yet.
- _____ 10. A friend comes to you with his problems, and you give him attention and advice. However, when you want to discuss your problems, he doesn't seem to have the time. You value the friendship, but you don't like feeling it's one-way.

_____ TOTAL

Interpreting Your Score

If your score indicates that you are moderately satisfied (25–39) or dissatisfied (0–24) with your communication skills, notice whether your answers are extremes (1s and 5s). Focus on improving your skills in the situations that make you uneasy.

Source: Based on Julia Wood and Stephanie Coopman's Instructor's Resource Manual for Wood's text, *Interpersonal Communication: Everyday Encounters*, 5th ed. Copyright © 2006, Cengage Learning.

YOUR PLAN FOR CHANGE

The **Assess yourself** activity gave you the chance to look at how you communicate. Now that you have considered your responses, you can take steps toward becoming a better communicator and improving your relationships.

Today, you can:

- Call a friend you haven't talked to in a while or arrange a coffee date with a new acquaintance you'd like to get to know better.
- Start a journal in which you keep track of communication and relationship issues that arise. Look for trends and

think about ways you can change your behavior to address them.

Within the next 2 weeks, you can:

- Spend some time letting the people you care about know how important their relationship is to you.

- If there is someone with whom you have a conflict, arrange a time to sit down with that person in a neutral setting away from distractions to talk about the issues.

By the end of the semester, you can:

- Practice being an active listener and notice when your mind wanders while you are listening to someone.
- Take note of your nonverbal messages. Work on maintaining good eye contact and using open body language and inviting facial expressions.