# **Chapter 1 Assignment**

# Victor C. Harris II

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Professor Sara L. Wilson

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# Question 1

*Review the reasons to study interpersonal communication. What areas of your life do you hope to improve by taking this class?*

My initial goal upon enrollment in this class was to develop my communication skills professionally. After reading Chapter 1, however, that goal has changed; I realized almost immediately after I began reading that I have just as much to gain from this course in my personal life as I do in my professional life.

Regarding my preliminary goal – to cultivate my communications skills professionally—I see this class as an opportunity to increase my value to the company I currently work for. I believe that in my current position (sales), there is a direct correlation between my value and my ability to establish and maintain relationships with my clients. So, by improving my ability to communicate, I should be able to build relationships more effectively with my customers and in turn, increase my value as an employee.

In terms of my personal relationships, I see this course as an opportunity to improve my relationship with my future wife, Allison. Although our relationship, as-is, is wonderful, there are undoubtedly communication barriers between us. My hope is that implementing the things that I learn from this course into the way that I communicate with her will result in us sharing an even stronger bond than we have now.

**206 words**

# Question 2

*Think of a celebrity, role model, or important person in your life, and describe what specifically he or she does to communicate competently.*

Interpersonal communication is something that I really struggled with as a teenager. I attribute this partly due to my inherent disinterest in general small-talk, and partly to many of my family members being virtually incapable of effective communication. The exception to that rule is my cousin Joe.

Joe and I both grew up in the same dysfunctional household with, at times, as many as 13 other family members. Being that Joe is 7 years older than me I naturally looked up to him and his ability to do the thing that my other family members did not seem capable of: make friends. While all of them are incredibly kind, loving, and empathetic people, Joe displays more interpersonal competence than the others primarily with his ability to minimize noise in a conversation. As the sender, Joe is clear and concise while speaking. This minimizes physiological noise by him articulating his signal in a way that is easy to understand. Doing this also prevents psychological noise that can be incited by rambling in the form of wandering thoughts and impatience in the receiver. Similarly, he reduces noise as the receiver by maintaining appropriate eye contact and offering subtle feedback as to not break the sender’s train of thought.

**206 words**

# Question 3

*Describe examples of noise in a situation you encountered today. What are ways to alleviate the noise that you mentioned in your examples?*

While Allison and I were eating breakfast together this morning, we watched a slideshow of photos from our shared album on our television. As we watched, we reminisced on some of our best memories, and began discussing things that are still on our list of things to do. The conversation was quite pleasant, and frankly, overdue. That is, until our 11-week-old puppy, Charlie, decided to tiger-pounce our 5-year-old husky. This resulted in a friendly-natured canine cage-fight in our living room, just as the conversation began to turn from toward realistically planning something. Although the psychological noise of constantly keeping track of Charlie as he is still learning to ask us to take him outside when he needs to go, this resulted in a tremendous amount of physical noise due to the commotion of the dogs wrestling in the other room. As a result, our conversation was cut-short, and we did not end up planning our next getaway as intended.

With Charlie’s high-energy demeanor, and his desire to play with his brother unlikely to dissipate, the noise we encountered is ideally avoided, altogether. The best way to achieve this would be to change the physical dimension before attempting to plan something. We can do this by resuming the conversation while Charlie takes a nap, or while we are running errands together while Charlie is at home.

**225 words**

# Question 4

*How can social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter be used in both positive and negative ways to enhance as well as to harm interpersonal relationships?*

Social networking has had a tremendous impact on the way we communicate with not only friends and family, but also potential employers, colleagues, and companies that we do business with. Nearly everyone uses some sort of social media to engage with others, and for some, it is their primary channel of communication. As with most drastic changes, it has had both positive and negative effects on the way we do things. This rings true with most of the elements that differentiate social media communication such as: its asynchronous nature, virtually unlimited scope of receivers.

Regarding social media’s inherent asynchronous nature, it can offer a notable opportunity for people to maintain relationships with family members and friends in the busy world that we live in today. With so many relationships being tested by hectic work schedules, overbooked agendas, and long distances, social media offers a remarkable opportunity for people to maintain otherwise impossible relationships with loved ones. Conversely, when relationships rely entirely on social media, it can make it difficult to communicate on a deeper level; even the best conversations have diminished effects when messages are sent without reply for long periods of time.

Another element of social media is its capability of offering people a way to communicate on a nearly infinite scale. This can be highly rewarding for those that want their message to be received by thousands, or even millions of people. Before social media, communication on this scale was only afforded to those who had the means to communicate through radio or television. Now, anybody with an internet device can reach any number of people that are willing to listen, allowing the sender to a establish interpersonal relationships with many people, all at once. As a result of this, however, this can sometimes lead to messages that are intended to be private, being unintentionally received by many people, often out of context. The potential semantic noise in this scenario could lead to relationships suffering due to the message not being decoded as it was intended to be.

**340 words**