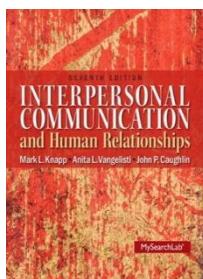


บทปริทัศน์หนังสือ (Book Review)

Interpersonal Communication and Human Relationships

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Book Title: Interpersonal Communication & Human Relationships
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Authors: Mark L. Knapp, Anita L. Vangelisti and John P. Caughlin

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This book, entitled “Interpersonal Communication and Human Relationships” (Knapp et al., 2014), has a unique focus on interpersonal communication in the context of developing relationships within the scope of contemporary US cultural context, especially the stages of growth and decay of interpersonal relationships or the increase and decrease in intimacy. An interesting point to note is the authors’ conceptualization that, in this book, growth and decay are processes of interpersonal relationships that do not necessarily indicate positive or negative connotations. Specifically, Knapp et al. (2014) conceptualized that the growth of interpersonal relationships with increased intimacy is not necessarily positive, while intentionally decreasing intimacy, which leads to the decay of interpersonal relationships, is not necessarily negative and could be appropriate for some interpersonal relationships. This book review categorizes the content of Knapp et al. (2014) into four parts and ends with an overall reflection of this book.

The first part, entitled “Patterns and Stages,” refers to the model of interaction stages of interpersonal relationships along with the eight dimensions of communication patterns and variations. Knapp et al. (2014) conceptualized the

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explicit associations between these two frameworks and recommended that both could be used simultaneously to analyze and explain each phenomenon of interpersonal communication.

The most outstanding elements of this first part are the examples given by the authors. These include the illustrative examples given by the authors to explain the concept of metacommunication, comprising the short examples of interpersonal communication on taking a seat and getting a cup of coffee, as well as the detailed example of different interpretations at the content level and relationship level during the interpersonal communication messages between a wife and a husband regarding watching television.

The second part, entitled “Factors Affecting Relationships,” refers to factors that influence interpersonal communication and relationships. This part can be organized into internal factors and external factors. Specifically, the internal factors identified by Knapp et al. (2014) are demographics, especially age and gender, and psychographics of the degree of interpersonal needs of each individual. Concurrently, the external factors identified by Knapp et al. (2014) are culture and environment, which the latter comprises both the physical environment and the digital environment of new media and communication technologies.

The authors provided several valuable insights in this second part. Regarding demographics, the authors provided useful insights regarding gender (instrumental vs. affective behaviors, achievements vs. relationships, activities vs. communications) and age (roles, experiences, lifestyle, health). Concerning psychographics, it is very interesting that the author identified varying degrees of interpersonal needs of each individual in terms of affection, control, and inclusion instead of focusing on collectivistic psychographics, such as lifestyles, in the way that consumer research does. For the external factors, the authors’ discussions on both the physical environment and the digital environment of new media and communication technologies are quite insightful.

The third part, “Interaction Patterns,” and the fourth part, “Effective Communication in Relationships,” of the book are detailed elaborations of the first part, “Patterns and Stages.” In the third part on “Interaction Patterns,” the communication patterns of interpersonal relationships can be conceptualized as “Form-Keep-End.” “Form,” the initial stage of interpersonal relationships, is referred to as “getting together” or “coming together” by the authors. The next stage, “Keep,” is referred to as “maintaining



relationships" or "relationship maintenance" in this book. Finally, "End," is referred to as "coming apart" or "terminating relationships" by the authors. The fourth part, "Effective Communication in Relationships," comprises the authors' explicit discussions about how to enhance the effectiveness of communication in interpersonal relationships in addition to the implicit discussions in the preceding three parts.

As an overall reflection, this book consists of three main strengths. Firstly, this book is easy to read and enjoyable with a storytelling style. Before introducing each interpersonal communication theory, concept, framework, or model, the authors give illustrative examples of specific messages of interpersonal communication that readers could easily relate to and continue reading to get to know the relevant theories. Secondly, another admirable quality of this book is that the authors regularly remind the readers about the limitations of each theory, concept, framework, and model. This book emphasizes that real-world interpersonal relationships could be more complex than the oversimplified approach of the body of academic knowledge of interpersonal communication with more variations in each situation and context. The authors encourage the readers to observe real-world situations and then compare and contrast them with academic knowledge in this book to see similarities and differences. Finally, this book is suitable for readers with and without prior knowledge of interpersonal communication. Readers without prior knowledge use this book for self-study of interpersonal communication theories and research, and readers with prior knowledge could gain additional knowledge from the overview, details, and references in each chapter. This book review recommends this book for both academics and practitioners.