**Communication Principles**

**Interpersonal Communications 11**

1. **Communication Principles**
2. **We communicate *with* others.** Communication isn’t something we do *to others;* rather, it is an activity we do *with them.* For example, it is like dancing: it is a unique creating that arises out of the way in which partners interact. The way you dance probably varies from one partner to another. Likewise with communication: it changes depending on your partner.
3. **Communication can be intentional or unintentional.**  Some communication is clearly deliberate: ie. Plan your words before asking your boss for a raise. But, even unintentional behavior is communicative: ie. A friend overhears you muttering complaints to yourself; you didn’t intend for her to hear them, but your words carried a message.

**Non-Verbal messages:** you might not be aware of your sour expression, impatient shifting, or sigh of boredom, but others view them nonetheless. Scholars debate without reaching consensus about whether unintentional behavior should be considered communication: **what do YOU think? Class discussion.**

The best way to boost understanding is to discuss your intentions and your interpretations of the other person’s behavior until you have negotiated a shared meaning (more on this later with active listening).

1. **Communication is irreversible.** We sometimes wish that we could back up time, erasing words or acts and replacing them with better alternatives. Unfortunately, such reversal is impossible. Sometimes an apology works; sometimes, no amount of explanation can erase the impression you have created. **It is impossible to “un-receive” a message.**
2. **Communication is unrepeatable.** Because communication is an ongoing process, it is impossible to repeat the same event. The initial friendly smile that worked so well when meeting a stranger last week might not succeed with the person you encounter tomorrow.