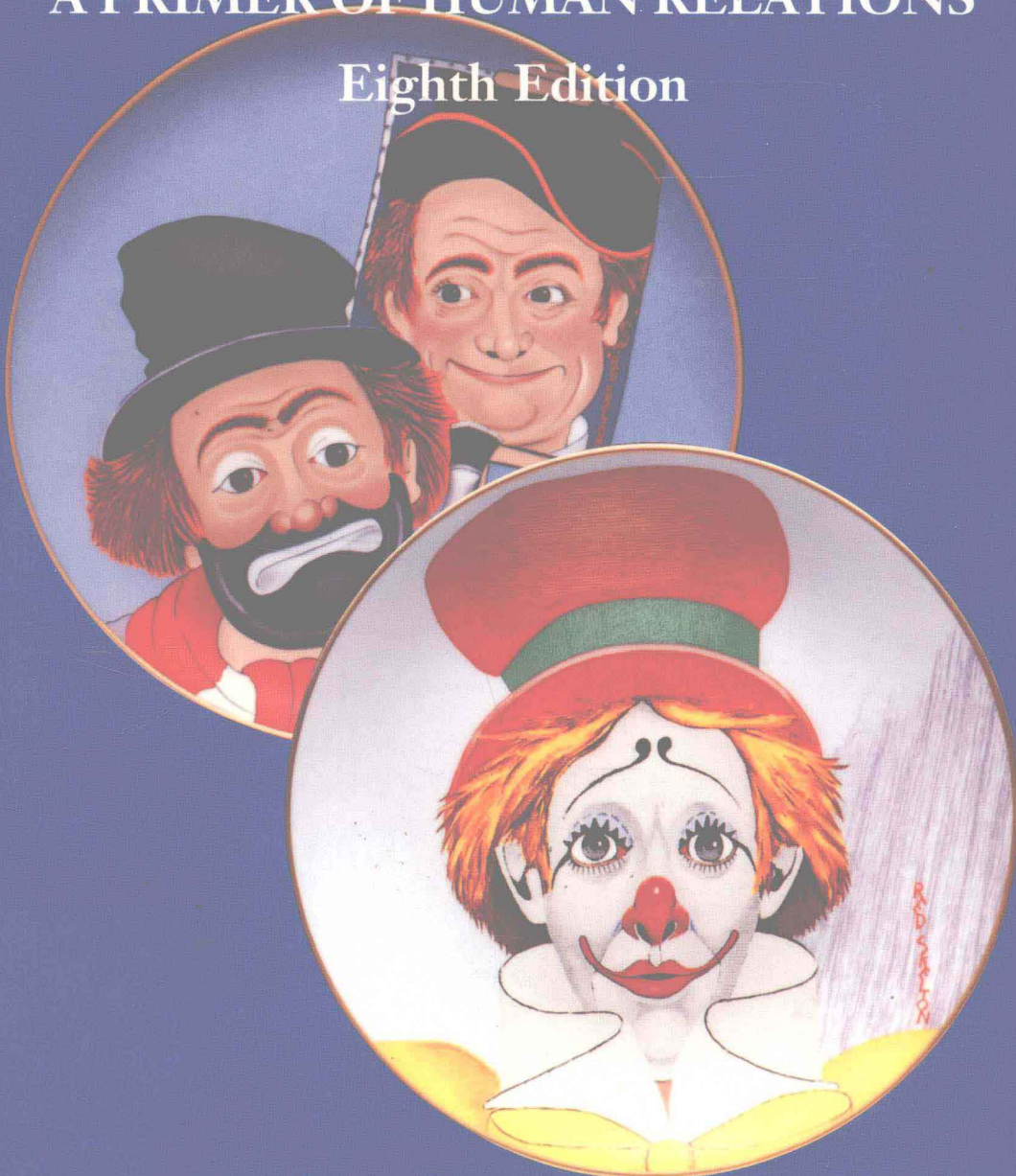


YOUR ATTITUDE IS SHOWING

A PRIMER OF HUMAN RELATIONS

Eighth Edition



Elwood N. Chapman

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**YOUR
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IS SHOWING**

A Primer of Human Relations

Elwood N. Chapman

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**YOUR
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PREFACE

The first seven editions of *Your Attitude Is Showing* have been used in the classroom and workplace for over thirty years to train both new and experienced employees. Over one million copies have been distributed. It remains one of the most highly regarded primers in the field of business human relations.

Your Attitude Is Showing has helped individuals of all ages and backgrounds play their human-relations roles with greater understanding and sensitivity. This eighth edition will be welcomed by all those who seek self-improvement.

Two new chapters have been added. Chapter 4 deals with how to handle situations “When People Step on Your Attitude.” Chapter 17 looks into the problem of “Attitude among Culturally Diversified Co-Workers.” New material on self-assessments, negative drift, and total quality management (TQM) has also been added.

As you read and study *Your Attitude Is Showing*, keep in mind that people who balance their technical skills with human-relations competencies find greater on-the-job happiness, contribute more to the productivity of organizations, and, in general, have more successful careers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

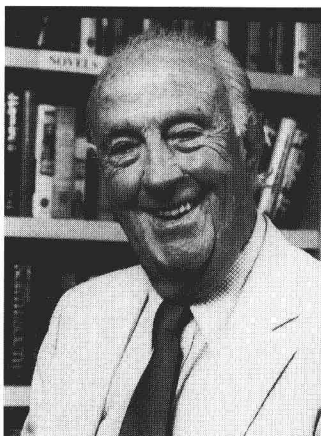
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The author and publisher sincerely thank Mr. Red Skelton and Mr. David W. Armstrong for allowing us to reproduce the Red Skelton collector plates on the front cover of this book.

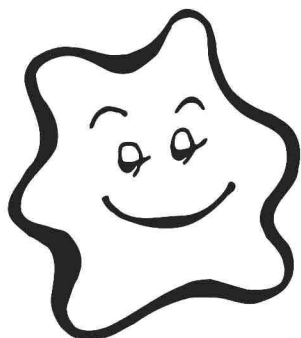
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elwood N. Chapman, author of *Your Attitude Is Showing* and other books, is known as “Mr. Attitude” in California. He is praised for his friendly writing style and practical advice. Students required to purchase the book for certain classes on campus seldom turn it back. A graduate of the University of California at Berkeley and former professor at Chaffey College, “Chap” is a nationally-known consultant and speaker.

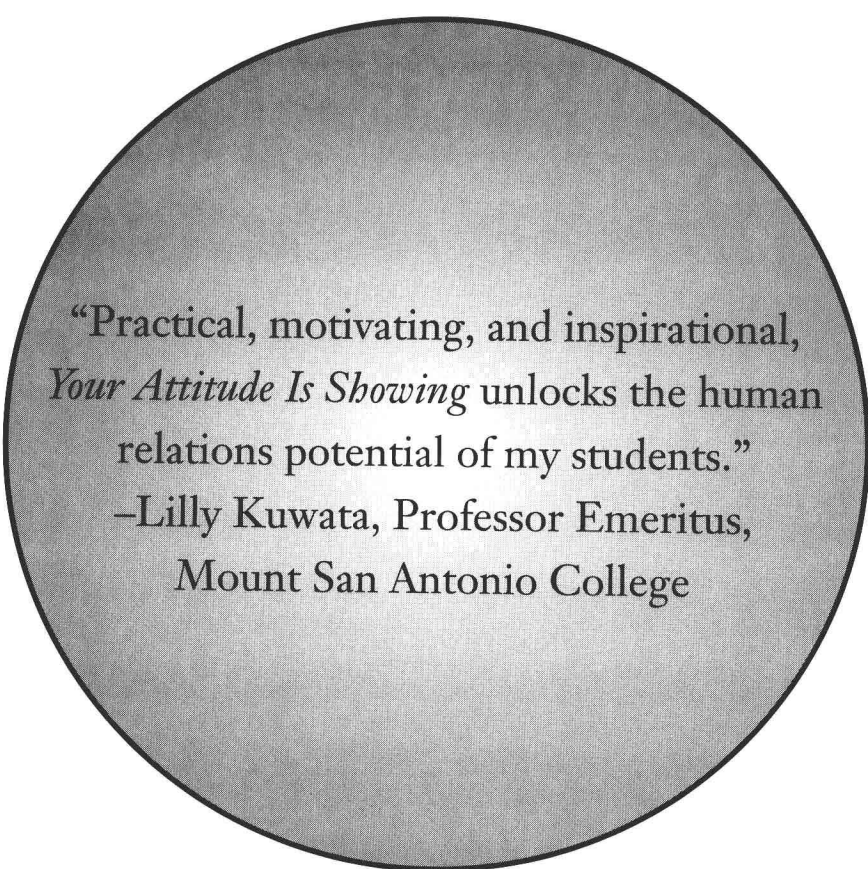


INTRODUCTION

This book could be appropriately subtitled *Gaining Personal Success in Business*, for nothing has more impact on career success than one's attitude. Illustrations like the one below will help you become more aware of the strong impact your attitude has on every aspect of your life. Each drawing shows an amoeba—a microscopic one-celled creature who is constantly changing in size and shape and who is often referred to as the lowest form of animal life. I hope the little amoeba will act as a reminder that, no matter where you are or what you are doing, *Your Attitude Is Showing*.



"After all, I'm just an amoeba."



“Practical, motivating, and inspirational,
Your Attitude Is Showing unlocks the human
relations potential of my students.”

–Lilly Kuwata, Professor Emeritus,
Mount San Antonio College

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Part I

UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF

Chapter 1

YOU CAN'T ESCAPE HUMAN RELATIONS



"I've heard all that old stuff before."

Most employees, even those with considerable experience, greatly underestimate the importance of human relations in building their careers.

They pass it off as nothing more than common sense.

They say it is something that one handles intuitively.

They are blind to the significance of the subject because they wrongly assume they are automatically good at it. But what exactly is *human relations*?

On the simplest level, human relations is being sociable, courteous, and adaptable. It is avoiding trouble with fellow workers. It is following the rules of simple etiquette. But as important as these qualities are to personal success, they only scratch the surface. Human relations is much more than behaving courteously so that people will like you. There is a second, more complex level.

Human relations is also knowing how to handle difficult problems when they arise. It is learning to work well under demanding and sometimes unfair superiors. It is dealing effectively with conflict. It is understanding yourself and how you communicate with others. It is building and maintaining long-term relationships with family, friends, and co-workers. It is knowing how to restore a working relationship that has deteriorated. It is learning to live with your frustrations without hurting others or jeopardizing your own career. It is communicating the right kind of attitude during

an employment interview. It is the foundation upon which good management careers are built. In short, human relations is *building and maintaining* relationships in many directions, with many kinds of people, in both good and bad working environments.

Positive attitudes appreciated. The most popular and productive people in any work environment are usually those with the best attitudes. Their positive attitudes

- inject humor into what otherwise would be just work. Everyone misses these individuals when they are on vacation.
- add to the team spirit by “bonding” everyone together in a more positive and productive mood. Many are unofficial leaders greatly appreciated by supervisors.
- make it easier for co-workers to maintain their upbeat attitudes. This, in turn, helps co-workers maintain productivity and enhance their own careers.

Employees who are consistently negative put an added strain on their co-workers. Their negative attitudes

- make it more difficult for others (especially the supervisor) to stay positive. Everyone operates under a needless handicap.
- act like a spoiled apple in a barrel, causing fellow employees to lose their enthusiasm and motivation to contribute. (Why produce more when Jack or Judy gets by with being so negative?)
- repress the fun and harmless horseplay that would normally surface and make everyone feel better about what they are doing. It often takes many highly positive attitudes to offset one that is negative.

Attitudes travel. When others are making a big effort to remain positive in their work environment, a single negative attitude can act as a cloud over the entire atmosphere. Productivity can drop. Customers can be treated poorly. Positive employees may seek opportunities elsewhere. Not everyone can be an attitude “star,” but negative attitudes damage human relationships in the workplace. Those who find it difficult to remain positive are invited to concentrate on Chapters 3, 19, and 20.

In the business world, human relations (attitude) is viewed best in terms of productivity because productivity is the goal of all group activity. Human relations, of course, is not a substitute for

work; it cannot replace or camouflage poor performance. Employees are valued primarily for the amount and quality of work they turn out. Your employer will expect you to do your share of the work—and if you are interested in moving ahead, you will want to do more than your share. An employer will not be interested for long in an employee who has a great attitude but produces very little.

But getting the work out is only one side of the coin. You should accomplish this work and still be sensitive to the needs of those who work with you. You should perform your work without trying to show up your fellow workers or antagonize them. You should carry your full load in such a way that others will be encouraged to follow rather than reject you.

No matter how ambitious or capable you are, you cannot become the kind of employee you want to be (or the kind of employee management wants you to be) without learning how to work effectively with people. It would be career suicide to join an organization and ignore the people who work around you. You simply cannot escape human relations.

Does this mean that you should deliberately set out to play a game of human relations on your new job? The answer depends upon what you mean by “playing a game.”

If you mean that you should play up to those who can do you the most good and pay little attention to others, the answer is, of course, no.

If you mean that you should devise a master strategy that will give you the breaks at the expense of other people, the answer is again no.

If, however, you mean that you should sincerely do everything you can to build strong, friendly, and honest working relationships with all the people you work with—including those from diverse cultures—the answer is an unqualified yes.

Does this come as a shock?

If so, think about it. Working hard is not enough in our modern society. It may have been thirty years ago, but it isn't today. You, as a new or experienced employee, have a definite human-relations role to play.

You can't ignore it.

You can't postpone it.

From the moment you join an organization you assume two responsibilities: (1) to do a job—the *best* job you can do with the

work assigned to you—and (2) to get along with *all* the people to the best of your ability. It is the right combination of these two factors that spells success.

Perhaps you are a highly qualified, experienced employee happy in your present work environment. Or perhaps, after working a number of years for a particular company, you are making a mid-life career change. Or your firm eliminated your position and you are seeking a similar one elsewhere. Or you may be graduating from an educational institution soon, and you are preparing to launch your career. The possibilities are endless, but no matter what your personal condition is now or what it may be in the future, human relations will play a dominant role.

It would be wrong, of course, to say that the skills or abilities you possess are unimportant. If you are employed as an office manager, your computer competencies are vital. If you are employed as an apprentice machinist, your mechanical ability is important. If you are a registered nurse hoping to get into management, your professional training and background are vital. These skills helped you get where you are, and they will help you make progress.

But they are not enough.

In order to make your education and experience work for you as effectively as possible, you must become competent in human relations. You must learn the technique of working with others.

Why?

Because your behavior has a direct bearing on the efficiency of others. Because your contribution will not always be an individual contribution; it will often be a component of a group effort, and you will only be a part of the group. Because what you accomplish will be in direct proportion to how well you get along with the people who work with you, above you, or for you.

Almost everything you do will have an effect on other people. If the effect is good, people may do a better job. If the effect is bad, they will be less productive. Your personal work effort will not be enough. You should conduct yourself in such a manner that those who work with you and near you will also become effective. As you move into supervisory roles, you will be judged less on your personal productivity and more on the team you manage.

Now let's take a closer look at the word *productivity*. It is a significant word in business, industry, and government today. Every organization operates either to make a profit or to reach a certain level of excellence.