

We can summarize our definitional tour by saying that **self-disclosure** (1) has the self as subject, (2) is intentional, (3) is directed at another person, (4) is honest, (5) is revealing, (6) contains information generally unavailable from other sources, and (7) gains much of its intimate nature from the context in which it is expressed.

Although many acts of communication may be self-revealing, this definition makes it clear that few of our statements may be classified as self-disclosure. Most conversations—even among friends—focus on everyday mundane topics and disclose little or no personal information (Dindia et al., 1997). Even partners in intimate relationships don't talk about personal matters with a high degree of frequency. (See the Focus on Research sidebar in Chapter 1, p. 19.)

MODELS OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

Now that we've defined self-disclosure, let's take a look at two models that help us better understand how self-revelations operate in our relationships with others.

Degrees of Self-Disclosure: The Social Penetration Model Social psychologists Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor (Taylor & Altman, 1987) describe two ways in which communication can be more or less disclosing. Their **social penetration model** is pictured in Figure 3.2. The first dimension of self-disclosure in this model involves the breadth of information volunteered—the range of subjects being discussed. For example, the breadth of disclosure in your relationship with a fellow worker will expand as you begin revealing information about your life away from the job, as well as

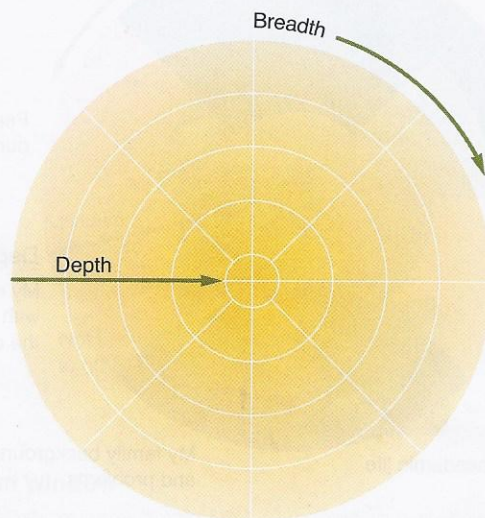


FIGURE 3.2 Social Penetration Model