

on-the-job details. The second dimension of disclosure is the depth of the information being volunteered—the shift from relatively impersonal messages to more personal ones.

Depending on the breadth and depth of information shared, a relationship can be defined as casual or intimate. In a casual relationship, the breadth may be great, but not the depth. A more intimate relationship is likely to have high depth in at least one area. The most intimate relationships are those in which disclosure is great in both breadth and depth. Altman and Taylor (1973) see the development of a relationship as a progression from the periphery of their model to its center, a process that typically occurs over time. Each of your personal relationships probably has a different combination of breadth of subjects and depth of revelation. Figure 3.3 pictures a student's self-disclosure in one relationship.

One way to classify the depth of disclosure is to look at the types of information that can be revealed. *Clichés* are ritualized, stock responses to social situations—virtually the opposite of self-disclosure: “How are you doing?” “Fine.” Although hardly revealing, clichés can serve as a valuable kind of shorthand that makes it easy to keep the social wheels greased.

Another kind of message involves communicating *facts*. Not all factual statements qualify as self-disclosure. To qualify they must fit the criteria of being intentional, significant, and not otherwise known: “This isn’t my first try at college. I dropped out a year ago with terrible grades.” Disclosing personal facts like these often signals a desire to move a relationship to a new level of intimacy.

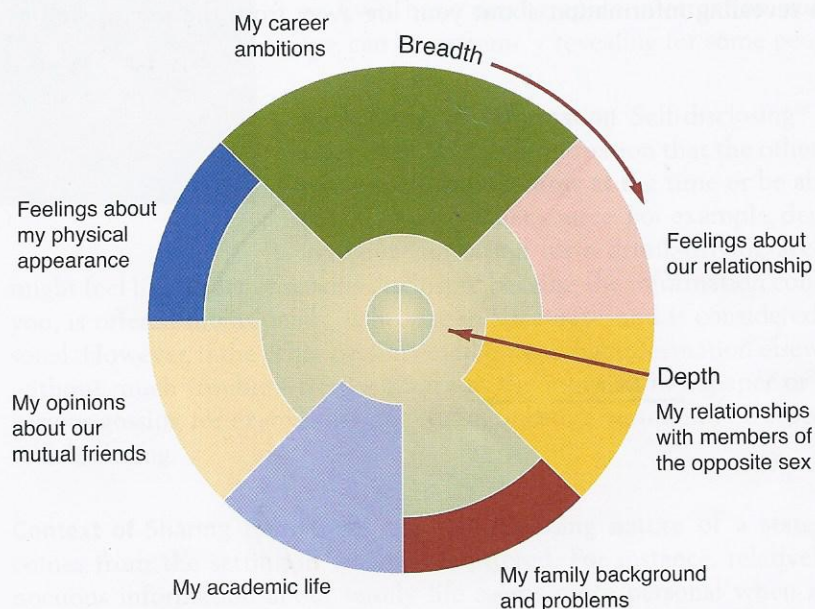


FIGURE 3.3 Sample Model of Social Penetration