

Norman's Interpersonal Communication in the Movie, On Golden Pond

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EXAMPLE

The movie On Golden Pond is a fantastic vehicle with which to consider six facets of interpersonal communication. The main character of the movie, Norman, provides for a multifaceted study in relationships, both with his "self" and with others.

I have chosen to focus this paper on several aspects of Norman's [interpersonal](#) communication. On [Golden Pond](#) is a fascinating study in the

discovery of Norman's need to communicate with those he cares about in new ways.

Our textbook defines communication being interpersonal "when the people involved are contacting each other as persons" (4). On Golden Pond is rich with excellent examples of interpersonal communication.

For example, Norman's relationship with his wife, Ethel, is most certainly interpersonal. As I watched the movie I was struck by how comfortable Ethel and Norman were with one another. Our text explains that "the term interpersonal labels a kind of communication that happens when the people involved talk and listen in ways that maximize the presence of the personal" (16). Ethel and Norman treat one another as unique individuals - each bringing different experiences to the relationship - because each has a differing view of life. Norman is afraid of his own mortality, and therefore he views life as threatening. On the other hand, Ethel dances, sings, and smiles her way through each day.

Examples of impersonal communication can also be taken from the movie.

Norman treats two teenagers pumping gas into his boat very impersonally, or nonpersonally. The boys could just as easily have been lampposts. Norman does not consider the boys ...

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...op" to feel like a

worthwhile human being.

Our textbook lists Curran's fifteen characteristics of a healthy family

(405). While I cannot see that Norman and Ethel's family live out any of these traits, I believe that, one fine day, they might figure out at least a couple of them. They do have "a sense of play and humor," (405) and they may eventually be a family who "affirms and supports one another" (405). In conclusion, Norman and his family are a true-to-life study in communication. On Golden Pond brilliantly portrays an enormous problem common to the family: poor interpersonal communication. It also shows that interpersonal interaction can be addressed at any stage in life - that it is never too late.

Works Cited

Stewart, John, and Carole Logan. Together: Communicating Interpersonally. 4th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993.

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