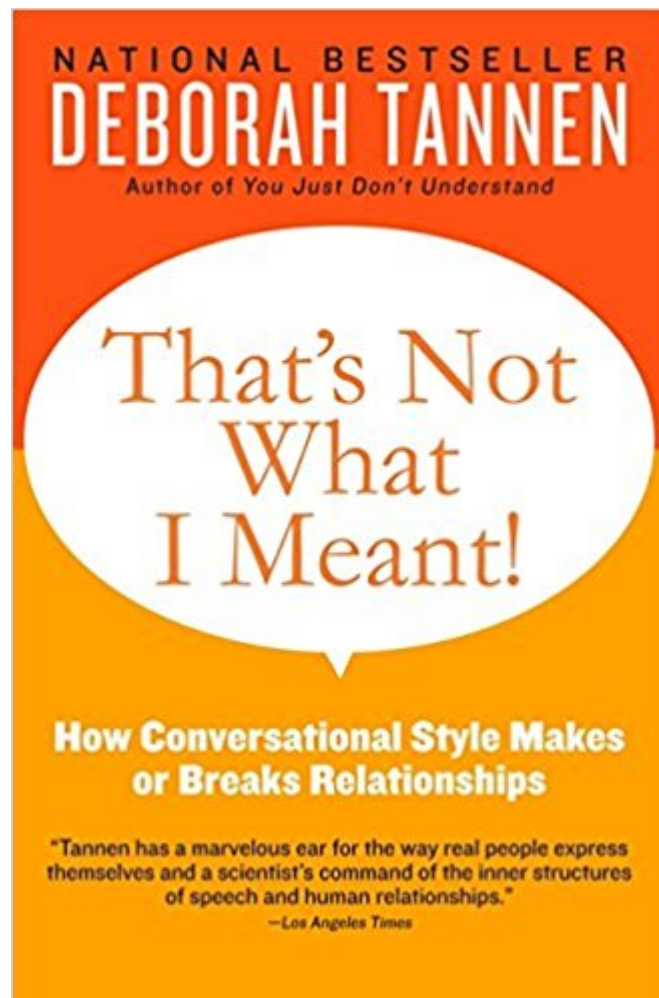




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# That's Not What I Meant!: How Conversational Style Makes Or Breaks Relationships



## Synopsis

“Tannen combines a novelist’s ear for the way people speak with a rare power of original analysis....Fascinating.” •Oliver Sacks, author of *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* and *The Mind’s Eye* In *That’s Not What I Meant!*, Deborah Tannen, renowned communication expert and author of the New York Times bestsellers *You’re Wearing THAT?* and *You Just Don’t Understand*, explores how conversational styles can make or break interpersonal relationships at home, at work, or at play. Fans of her books and the healthily curious reader interested in popular psychology, feminism, linguistics, or social sciences will be fascinated by Tannen’s remarkable insights into unintentional conversational confusion. *That’s Not What I Meant!* is an essential guide to recognizing and adjusting what we say and how we are saying it in order to strengthen or save a relationship.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"We are, all of us, foreigners to each other: editor and writer, man and woman, Californian and New Yorker, friend and friend. Dr. Tannen shows us how different we are, and how to speak the same language." Jack Rosenthal  
Pulitzer Prize winner and editor THE NEW YORK TIMES  
Deborah Tannen, who revolutionized our thinking about relationships between women and men in her bestseller *YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND*, shows that conversational confusion between the sexes is only part of the picture. In *THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT!*, Dr. Tannen shows that growing up in different parts of the country, having different ethnic and class backgrounds, even age and individual personality, all contribute to different conversational styles. Entertaining and informative, this is an

essential complement to psychological theories of human behavior. No one who has read Deborah Tannen's fascinating look at women and men will want to miss a word of it!

At home, on the job, in a personal relationship, it's often not what you say but how you say it that counts. Deborah Tannen revolutionized our thinking about relationships between women and men in her #1 bestseller *You Just Don't Understand: In That's Not What I Meant!*, the internationally renowned sociolinguist and expert on communication demonstrates how our conversational signals—voice level, pitch and intonation, rhythm and timing, even the simple turns of phrase we choose—are powerful factors in the success or failure of any relationship. Regional speech characteristics, ethnic and class backgrounds, age, and individual personality all contribute to diverse conversational styles that can lead to frustration and misplaced blame if ignored—but provide tools to improve relationships if they are understood. At once eye-opening, astute, and vastly entertaining, Tannen's classic work on interpersonal communication will help you to hear what isn't said and to recognize how your personal conversational style meshes or clashes with others. It will give you a new understanding of communication that will enable you to make the adjustments that can save a conversation . . . or a relationship.

As someone who has deeply studied linguistics and who has been lectured by Tannen and her protégés, I think that this book a great high-level book about cross-cultural communication. Tannen's writing is clear, easy to follow, and makes for a great light reading; her style also is able to capture more complex linguistic theories (e.g. pragmatics and discourse analysis) succinctly and present them in a publicly digestible manner. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone who shows interest in cross-cultural communications. That said, I feel like Tannen bases her theories a little too firmly on anecdotal evidence, whether those experiences be hers or her friends'/students'. In addition, her theories can be too high-level and loose. Finally, I think she could have done a better job at explaining her notions of positive and negative face, as well as how those can play out in social situations.

Just looking at relationships as a constant negotiation between involvement and independence would be enough of an insight to make this book worth it, but there was so much more. I enjoyed her dissection of status (power vs. solidarity), insights into how pacing of speech makes a difference in how we interpret each others' intentions, how we often forget that others are reacting to us, how relationship dynamics can spin out of control due to "complementary schismogenesis", and some

valuable advice on what you can fix--and what to expect when you try. Tannen writes in a clear, engaging style and concludes that mere understanding of these dynamics can have a huge impact in your life. I'm happy to have read it, and I hope it leads to more understanding and patience.

My title says it all. What's especially relevant to me is that I've had a traumatic brain injury & have residual deficits with expressing myself clearly so that the person with whom I'm communicating understands the intent of my message. This has been an ongoing issue. The book is easy to read, understand & put into practice. It has already helped me with more clearly communicating the intent of my message so the other person understands what I'm truly trying to communicate correctly. I'm certainly not perfect & will have to be continuously mindful of what I'm learning in this book for the rest of my life (due to my traumatic brain injury), but others have noticed an improvement in the clarity of the messages I'm trying to communicate. I'm very thankful for the help this book is giving me as a person who has been misunderstood many times (sadly, to my disadvantage) due to the permanent damage I've encountered to the area of my brain responsible for communication. If this book has helped me, one who has had a traumatic brain injury, I can only imagine how it would tremendously help anyone who has not encountered a traumatic brain injury.

I'm not even all the way through this book, and it has already been a huge help in my relationship with my wife. What an eye-opener! This is worth more than a pile of the top-selling self-help books. Especially if you, or someone you love, may be in the autism spectrum/Asperger's zone, this can be a huge help in doping out what kind of communication you

I originally bought this book for a project for a health class, and begrudgingly opened it, only to get sucked right in. So many things Tannen brings up in here are so relatable, and makes so much sense! Stuff that sounds like it should be simple, but in real life, we just don't notice. It was really interesting to read; I hope I can apply some of her teachings into my speaking and listening patterns!

That's not what I meant has been an interesting read. It has truly made me think more about conversational styles, as well as gender and cultural differences as a way of making meaning of the conversational breakdowns that affect personal relationship. At times, Tannon's examples are almost verbatim of conversations in which I have participated and I think 'Ah! So that's why that went south!' I enjoyed the breakdown of each of the chapters and have been challenged more

about thinking about balancing involvement vs independence.

Interesting. I enjoyed the author's conversational style (considering her topic, THAT should be good!)--makes the most of entertaining narrative to convey academic material.

For those who are new to understanding human interactivity, this book may offer many revelations. For those of us who sell for a living, this book doesn't offer much. The Dale Carnegie classic, "How to Win Friends and Influence People", offers more in terms of interpersonal skills, and the science has come a long way since his time.

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