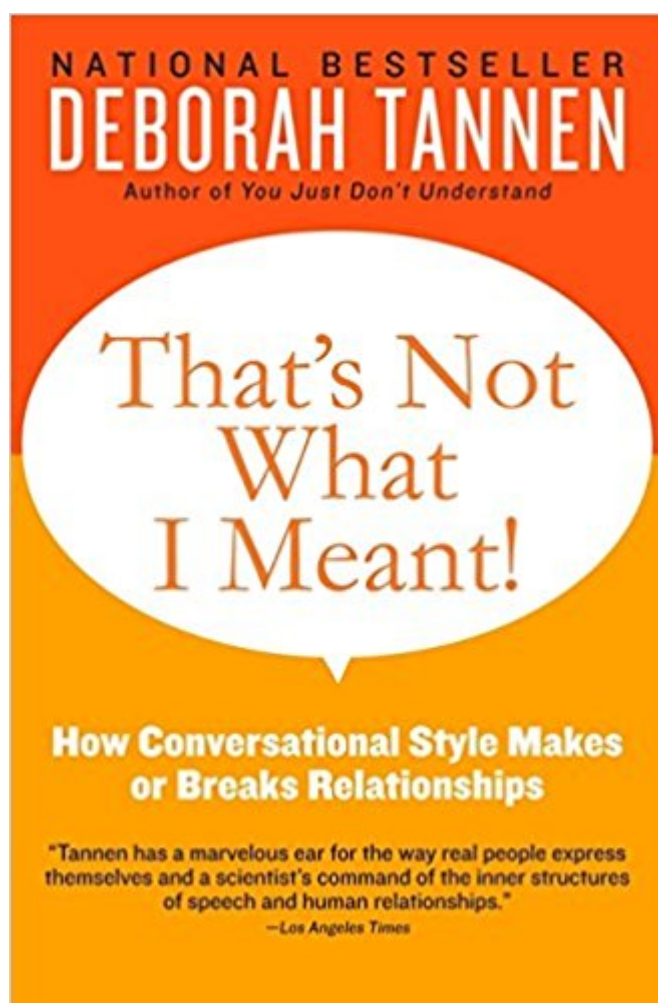


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That's Not What I Meant!: How Conversational Style Makes Or Breaks Relationships



Synopsis

Deborah 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

I assign Tannen's *That's Not What I Meant* for my college students to read. They frequently report how reading and discussing it for our class has transformed their close relationships with friends and family - particularly with their spouses - as they're much better able to understand each other and how they and others communicate. Most say they can't wait to finish reading the book so they can make their husband or wife read it. Occasionally, a student will complain (unfairly, perhaps) that Tannen uses too many examples, but most recognize that each example serves to illustrate a concept Tannen discusses, keeping the book grounded in the concrete and tangible and staying away from getting too abstract. From an instructor's perspective, I see Tannen's examples as

well-balanced with the rest of the book's content; there are enough examples to make the concepts clear but not so much that one gets bored waiting for her to make her point. Her prose is clear and concise, and the book is organized so that the later concepts build upon the earlier ones in a helpful and logical way. Tannen helps us understand how we don't just pay attention to the words spoken: in fact, we pay less attention to the message than what she calls the "metamessage": the implied and inferred meanings that each utterance evokes. Language is a lot more complex than we think, and by understanding that, we'll be much better able to understand each other - and understand why we sometimes seem to "click" so well with someone we've only just met, or why conversations sometimes feel awkward or go very badly awry (and how to avoid or at least mitigate such failures). For example, with the (now-cliche'd) question "Does this dress make me look fat?"

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