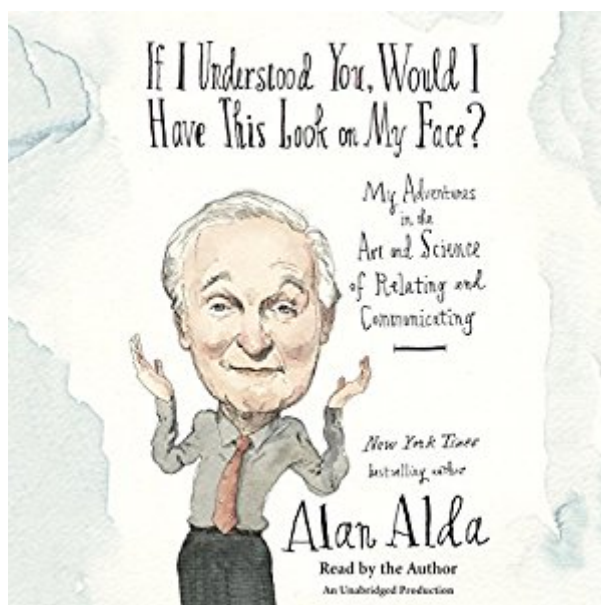


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# If I Understood You, Would I Have This Look On My Face?: Relating To And Communicating With Others, From The Boardroom To The Bedroom



## Synopsis

From iconic actor and best-selling author Alan Alda, an indispensable guide to communicating better - based on his experience with acting, improv, science, and storytelling. The beloved actor shares fascinating and powerful lessons from the science of communication and teaches listeners to improve the way they relate to others using improv games, storytelling, and their own innate mind-reading abilities. With his trademark humor and frankness, Alan Alda explains what makes the out-of-the-box techniques he developed after his years as the host of Scientific American Frontiers so effective. This book reveals what it means to be a true communicator and how we can communicate better in every aspect of our lives - with our friends, lovers, and families; with our doctors; in business settings; and beyond.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Normally, I find this kind of book that has one big idea, an ideal candidate for skimming. There is often a lot of filler, and a tendency to pound away at that one idea until the book has reached an acceptable length for commercial publication. Alan Alda's book has the one idea, that we have to relate to each other in order to communicate, and then he embroiders on that theme for the rest of the book, but it is so entertaining and chatty, that I enjoyed it well after buying into the big idea. He uses examples from sociology and psychology studies as well as from his experiences as an actor. Nicely done!

This review will get lost among all the fake reviews (the 'Top 1000 reviewers' who supposedly find this book earth-shattering), but after wasting my time I view it as a public service to tell it how it is. The book is an easy, even pleasant read. Alan follows his own advice of telling stories, and the result is a book that reads fast and smoothly. But at the end of it, I felt that I had learned nothing practical about how to communicate better. Why? Precisely because Alan tells stories (mostly about all the "fascinating" projects he's been involved in to improve how scientists communicate) but never brings it all together into a clear, memorable framework -- like, say, the four steps of Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication. Here is my take-away. Read this, and you will have saved your time and money.

1. Good communication requires empathy.
2. Improv helps you learn empathy. If you take an improv class, it may improve your skill to communicate complex information to a lay audience, at least for a while.
3. If you can't take an improv class, try meditating daily, naming the emotions others are feeling, gazing into people's eyes, and reading novels.
4. People memorize information better if you present it to them as a story, especially a story where there is a goal, and obstacles to surmount.
5. Alan thinks highly of the book *Made to Stick* by Chip Heath. That's it!

In the comments, I would love it if people would suggest books that contain actual practical advice about how to communicate better.

5++ stars Every single person on the planet should read this book. Alan Alda (who is a phenomenal writer) has written a highly informative book about the importance of communicating better. He then goes on to provide innovative and creative ways to help people do so. He is a natural storyteller, and the book is so entertaining that I completed it in one evening. Alda uses miscommunication stories from his own life to demonstrate how important it is for people to understand each other, and the issues that arise when we don't. A major focus of Alda's is teaching empathy. Relating to others creates empathy, and from there the desire to understand and cooperate is born. He also focuses on improving communication through listening with our eyes, using a story to make a point, eliminating confusing jargon, and paying close attention to what the other person's face is telling us. *If I Understood You* is one of the most informative and useful books that I have read in a long while. After I finished it, I immediately emailed my daughter's teachers suggesting they use it to support a creative combined math and science class that she took last year. I also think the techniques will help me with my own relationships, including my husband, children and friends. I highly, highly recommend this book to everyone. This book would make a great gift, and our world (and particularly our country right now) would be such a better place if everyone followed his ideas.

Thanks to NetGalley and Random House for the chance to read this ARC in exchange for an honest review.

This is one of the best books on effective communication I have ever read. Alan Alda is an amazing personality whose life is far more enriching than just his stage persona would indicate. The combination of rich stories, fascinating research, and shared wisdom combined with Alda's self-effacing humor make this an informative, entertaining and highly valuable read. I will be providing copies to my three grandchildren. I wish I had read it 60 years ago. Where were you, Alan, when I needed you? Sounds like the title for another book, doesn't it.

Too academic to be enjoyable. He sites many studies to support his theories but this seems lengthy and, other than stories he shared, less memorable. I was disappointed and expected more humor. FrankKay I think he is trying to promote seminars that he offers.

Got a few pages to go. Review to follow. But I've already rated it, because it's that good. A fun read. You can hear Alan Alda's voice throughout.

Excellent book! Well written from an extraordinary author.

You can hardly go wrong reading Alan Alda.

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