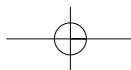
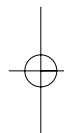
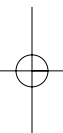
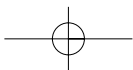
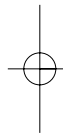
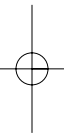
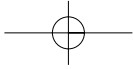
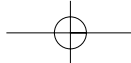


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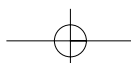
BA MA DipEd

International Training and Communications Consultant

Communications Consultant to the WHO Foundation Collaborating Centre
for International Drug Monitoring (the Uppsala Monitoring Centre, Sweden)
He lives in Thailand.



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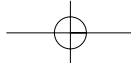
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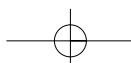
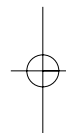
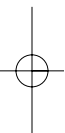
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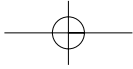
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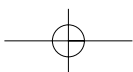
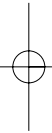
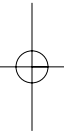
No one ever found wisdom without also being a fool. Writers, alas, have to be fools in public, while the rest of the human race can cover its tracks.

Erica Jong





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Preface

This is a personal note from the author to you, that most important of people, my reader, to explain a few things about me and the book.

I was born in the UK in the final months of the second world war, and am, therefore, (a) very old, and (b) a child of the era of universal, free healthcare for all, as it was embodied in the British National Health Service (NHS). I believe in healthcare as a right for all, not as a commodity for purchase, or a privilege for developed countries, or a grudging and tight-fisted concession for the poor. In that sense, I am a dreamer.

However, I am also hard-headed enough to know that we do not live in an ideal or idealistic world, and that the realities of modern healthcare around the world (including the modern NHS) are far from the aspirations of the original UK health scheme. But I also have a vision of how first-class contemporary healthcare can be delivered at the personal and local level across the globe, by healthcare professionals who are medically and technically proficient, and are thoughtful, reflective, compassionate, and experts in human relations and communications. I know that there are some places where such ideals are a living reality of daily practice but that there are far more where they are not.

This book is about the immense richness and complexity of human nature, and the intriguing challenges of being an effective professional and

human being in all roles and relationships, with patients, with colleagues and beyond. While relationships with patients are constantly in mind throughout the book, and there are lots of specific examples, this is not an itemised workshop manual of advice and techniques for every patient encounter. Its aim is to nourish your knowledge and insight on a very broad front, so that you can bring greater understanding and wisdom to the whole spectrum of your work. You will find much more detailed, methodical, technical and research-based material in other excellent books, many of which are referenced in the appendixes.

To hard-pressed professionals, some of the material may seem absurd in its ambition – ‘Who has time for this?’ they may say. The answer is this: the fundamental wisdom of this book takes time to acquire, but living that wisdom does not so much take time, as change the way time is spent and its quality and usefulness. For those meeting patients, there may be only four or eight or eleven minutes but that time can be squandered – or richly exploited for the patient’s welfare and benefit. All encounters with patients and all relationships can be enriched by greater knowledge and skill, whatever the culture, the continent or the constraints.

This book is for everyone in healthcare, especially doctors, nurses and pharmacists, in training and in practice. It is also for other medical specialists

and non-medical personnel, for everyone in the healthcare team who wants to reach higher standards in patient care and greater satisfaction in work. It's about creating compassionate and coherent relationships and systems for the delivery of healthcare. It also includes many of the skills for managing essential, everyday communications activities which do not directly involve patients but

which affect everyone in one way or another (writing, public presentations, dealing with complaints and many more).

I hope you will enjoy the book, be provoked to think and argue and disagree, be inspired by it, and find many things that will stimulate and intrigue you and help you to be even more effective in your important work.

Bruce Hugman
Chiang Rai, Thailand
January 2009

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About the author

Since 1995 Bruce Hugman has been consultant in communications to the Uppsala Monitoring Centre (WHO Collaborating Centre for International Drug Monitoring), in Uppsala Sweden. He has written extensively on healthcare communications, particularly relating to pharmacovigilance and patient safety, and teaches and lectures in many parts of the world. His careers include teaching English and social studies in schools and universities, managing an agricultural

smallholding, working in the criminal justice system as a probation and training officer, holding senior public relations posts in public transport operations and, for over a decade, running his own communications company in the UK before going freelance. He has published books in the fields of literary criticism, sociology, criminology and biography, and contributed to edited collections on drug safety and patient safety. He lives in Thailand.

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Writing this book has been a wonderful opportunity and a big challenge, but it would not have happened at all, and would not have had half the quality I hope it has, without the direct and indirect contribution of a very large numbers of wise and kindly people.

Four people have provided particularly generous support in the shaping and writing of the book: Dr Arnold Gordon, who meticulously and tirelessly examined a late draft, offering many valuable suggestions and insights from early on; Dr Awi Curameng, who read early drafts, helped in the writing of some of the more specialist medical material, and was an enthusiast for the project from the beginning; Jeremy Lowe, whose thoughtful and supportive editing and commentary helped me along in the difficult middle stages of the book; Prof Rafe Edwards, whose friendship, support and insight in relation to life in general and to this book in particular, have inspired me over many years. To them, I am deeply indebted.

In the preparation of this book, friends, colleagues and previous strangers round the world have been extraordinarily generous and helpful with support, ideas and materials. Some of them appear in the second list below, but there are many who do not:

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The content of the book, and such wisdom and insight as it may have, come from a lifetime of interest in the issues and endless reflection, reading and discussion about most of them, with hundreds of people – students, colleagues, friends, clients – over the years. They come particularly from the influence of a number of remarkable people I have had the privilege of knowing, who have influenced my life in one way or another, some of them profoundly. Many of them know, I hope, about my gratitude and affection, but this is an opportunity

for me to express those feelings publicly, and to put them on record.

To these great people, some out of contact for many years, some now dead, but most still alive and well and in touch, I owe a debt of gratitude for the various ways in which they contributed to the richness and happiness and learning in my life:

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Finally, a slightly romantic footnote: some of this book was written in my wooden cottage in Sweden, previously owned by that doyenne of Swedish journalism and letters, Sigrid Kahle. When she moved away, she left me the great oak desk on which she had done much of her lifetime's writing, and I am grateful for that and the inspiration it and my recent friendship with her have provided.

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The author hopes you will enjoy these diversions from his own thoughts and words. The quotations do not necessarily represent his point of view, but many provide important challenges and alternative perspectives to our ideas from serious writers and thinkers. Please note that the quotations have not been edited to conform with modern principles of non-discriminatory language: they appear as they were originally written or spoken). The cartoons were drawn by Richard Lear at J&L Composition.