Inclusive Science Communication

CEE Faculty Meeting/DEI Presentation

December 2021

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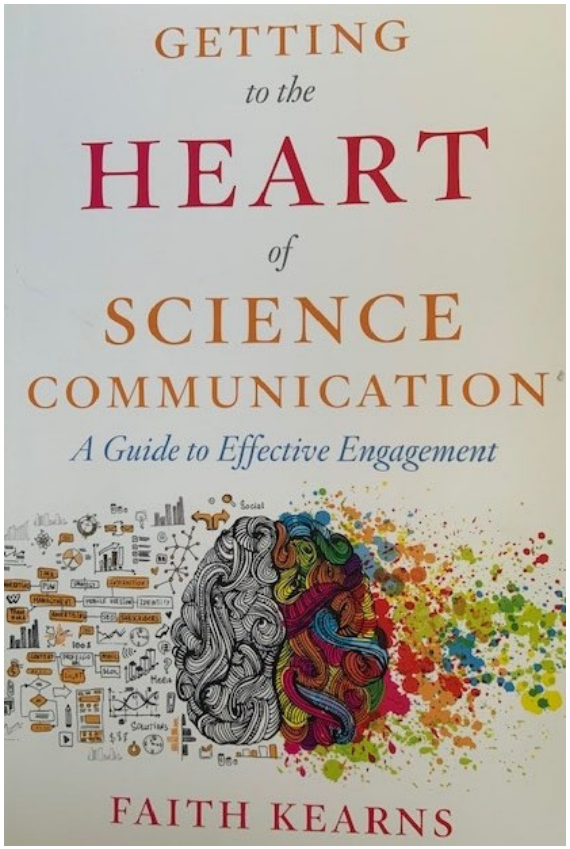

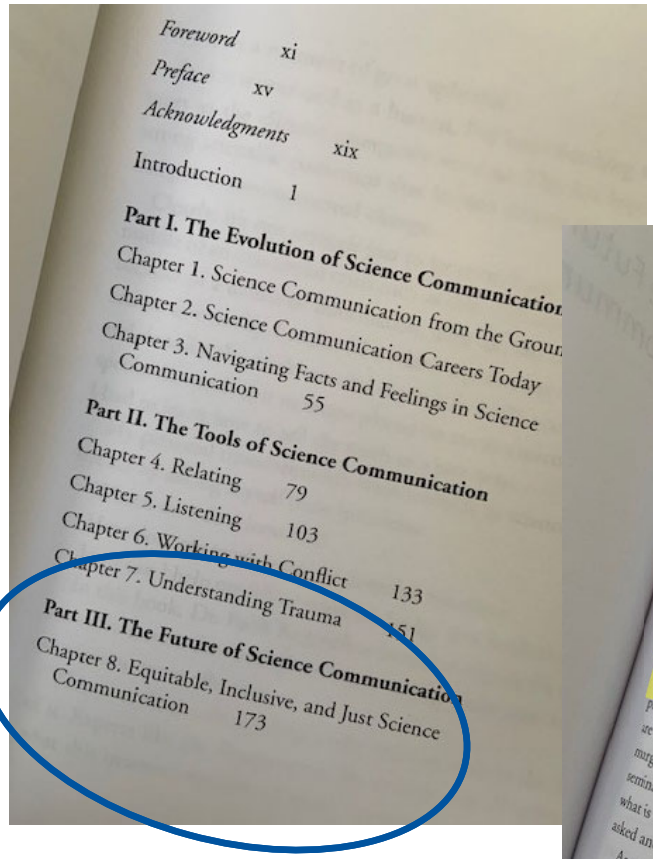

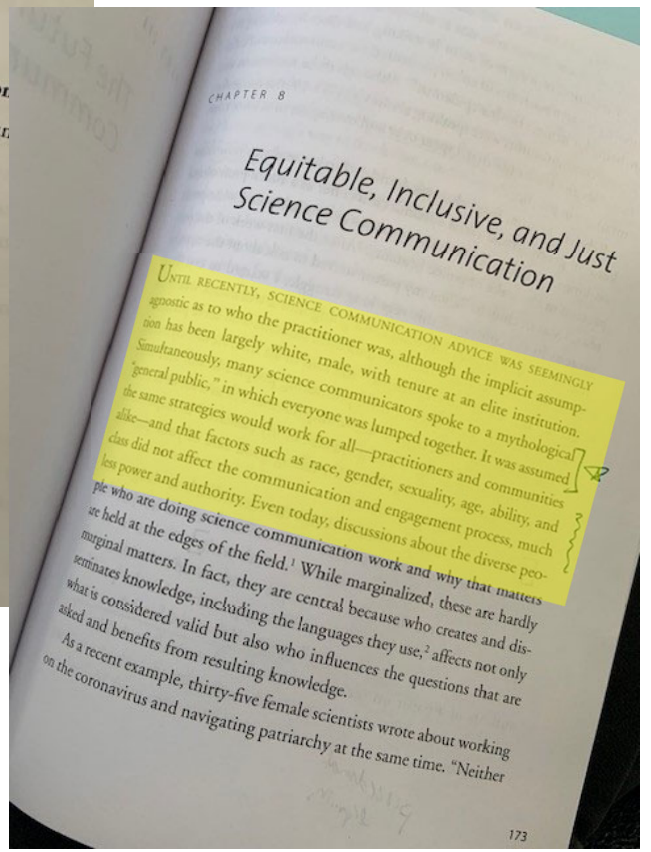
CHAPTER 8

Equitable, Inclusive, and Just Science Communication

UNTIL RECENTLY, SCIENCE COMMUNICATION ADVICE WAS SEEMINGLY agnostic as to who the practitioner was, although the implicit assumption has been largely white, male, with tenure at an elite institution. Simultaneously, many science communicators spoke to a mythological "general public," in which everyone was lumped together. It was assumed the same strategies would work for all—practitioners and communities alike—and that factors such as race, gender, sexuality, age, ability, and class did not affect the communication and engagement process, much less power and authority. Even today, discussions about the diverse people who are doing science communication work and why that matters are held at the edges of the field.[1] While marginalized, these are hardly marginal matters. In fact, they are central because who creates and disseminates knowledge, including the languages they use,[2] affects not only what is considered valid but also who influences the questions that are asked and benefits from resulting knowledge.

As a recent example, thirty-five female scientists wrote about working on the coronavirus and navigating patriarchy at the same time. "Neither

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Expertise = elitism

Our perspective is never complete

We want our work to be applied

We need to connect with many different types of people

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Language is critical for inclusive communication

Connect to non-experts

Build our field

Expand our reach

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Inclusive language helps us identify our own biases

- Positionality
  - Before communicating, consider:
    - How did you get to where you are?
    - Who is your research intended to benefit?
    - Who created the problem that your research is intended to solve?
    - Who was involved in crafting the research agenda?
- Framing
  - Engage with your audience by:
    - Acknowledging your research sits within a socioeconomic, cultural, and political context
    - Orienting your research story to your communication goals

Inclusive language is a form of procedural equity

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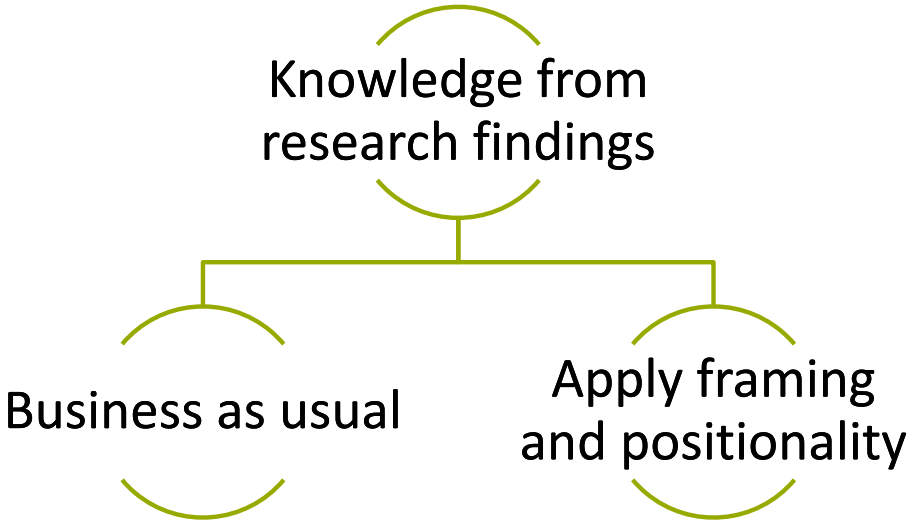
We can choose our path:



- Business as usual
  - "Preach to the choir"
- Framing and positionality
  - Greater social relevance
  - Build trust
  - More complete understanding

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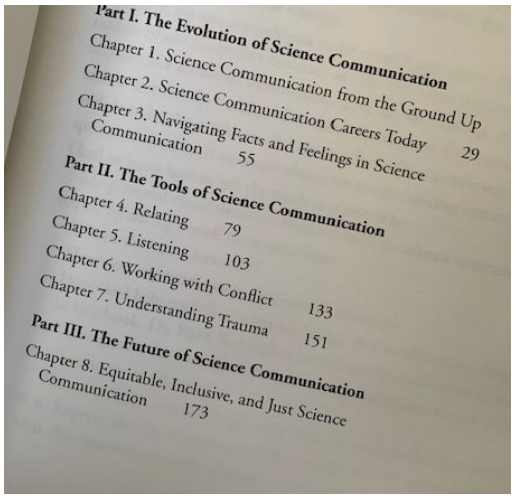
The Tools of Science Communication *(Kearns, Chapters 4-7)*



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- Relating
- Listening
- Working with conflict
- Understanding trauma

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For further reading

- Polk E and Diver S (2020) Situating the Scientist: Creating Inclusive Science Communication Through Equity Framing and Environmental Justice. Front. Commun. 5:6. doi: 10.3389/fcomm.2020.00006
- Contera S (2021) Communication is central to the mission of science. Nat. Rev. Mater. 6:377-378.
- Getting to the Heart of Science Communication: A Guide to Effective Engagement (Faith Kearns)