



# The Compass of Friendship: Narratives, Identities, and Dialogues

*William K Rawlins*

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**Congratulations to William K. Rawlins, winner of the David R. Maines Narrative Research Award for *The Compass of Friendship* to be presented at NCA 2009 during the Ethnography Division Business Meeting**

*"The book is a valuable addition to the literature on friendship. Faculty who teach relationship development will find useful material for themselves and their students. Relationship researchers will find dozens of possible studies in these pages. Finally, any thoughtful person interested in relationship quality could profit from reading this interesting treatment of one of life's most valuable attributes?our friends." - Phil Backlund, University of Denver*

Exploring how friends use dialogue and storytelling to construct identities, deal with differences, make choices, and build inclusive communities, **The Compass of Friendship** examines communication dialectically across private, personal friendships as well as public, political friendships. Author William K. Rawlins uses compelling examples and cases from literature, films, dialogue and storytelling between actual friends, student discussions of cross-sex friendships, and interviews with interracial friends. Throughout the book, he invites readers to consider such questions as: What are the possibilities for enduring, close friendships between men and women? How far can friendship's practices extend into public life to facilitate social justice? What are the predicaments and promises of friendships that bridge racial boundaries? How useful and realistic are the ideals and activities of friendship for serving the well-lived lives of individuals, groups, and larger collectives?

## Key Features

- Incorporates undergraduate students' debates about cross-sex friendships. Discussions draw on popular culture and lived experiences to re-examine gendered identities, sexual orientations, and narratives of romance and the well-lived life
- Investigates the possibilities of cross-race friendships between blacks and whites in light of personal, sociocultural, and historical issues. Using short stories, autobiographies, and interviews with a male and a female pair of friends, he book probes the capacities of friendship to address our similarities and differences in enriching ways
- Develops an original theoretical synthesis of work concerning dialogue and narrative. A chapter featuring an afternoon conversation between two longtime friends illustrates storytelling and dialogue as vitally interwoven communicative activities that shape friends' identities
- Explores friendship's ethical and political potentials. Classic and contemporary views clarify friendship's ethical guidance in our lives, as Rawlins demonstrates how learning about others in a spirit of equal respect can involve us in political participation
- Celebrates hopeful private and public communication by friends. The book provides students a useful model they can use in evaluating the ethical qualities of their relationships/friendships and helps them to think differently about their possibilities for participating meaningfully in politics

The **Compass of Friendship** is appropriate for use in courses in Advanced Interpersonal Communication, Friendship Communication, Communication in Interpersonal Relationships, Relational Communication,

Social and Personal Relationships, Dialogue and Communication, Social Identities and Communication Ethics.

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