

This book deals with a form of public discourse that also occurs in everyday interaction: image restoration. When one encounters certain messages (criticism, complaints, accusations, blame, censure, condemnation, rebukes, reproaches, objections) or is suspected of wrongdoing, failed obligations, mistakes, or embarrassments, one needs to know how to respond, both mentally and behaviorally. The author is very thorough in his list of situations that lead to image restoration and his list of responses is the most extensive I've seen. We all know bits and pieces about image restoration, but Benoit pulls it all together in a comprehensive work on the subject. -- Dudley D. Cahn, State University of New York at New Paltz  
Because responding to complaints is such an important part of human relations, this type of discourse has been studied in various disciplines. However, these studies tend to take a narrow focus. For example, some scholars study apologies and excuses in everyday talk. Others look at public apologies in speeches. Accounts, Excuses, and Apologies integrates and extends existing work on this concept into a general theory. The resulting theory of image restoration is then tested through application to several instances of defensive discourse. It is well written, comprehensive, and articulate in building a case of a general theory of image restoration. As I read the book, I was astonished at the list of ideas that the material prompted me to generate for future research. Good writing and new springboards should do that, and his book serves that role. -- Beth M. Waggenpack, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

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