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 From the preface by M.M. Cummings, then Director National Library of Medicine: '... much needed. Communications in medicine have been recognised as a deficiency in health care delivery for many years, yet few have attempted to analyze the reasons for the problem and fewer persons have made the effort to provide a guide to its solution. ... [Harlem's] approach to the problem is quite pragmatic since it draws on his extensive experience as a medical educator, practitioner and editor. ... [His] views on speaking and writing deserve every student's and physician's careful attention.' What he presents is still very pertinent for the dialogue in medicine, even if there are now further, electronic means of (mis)communication.</p>