

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book was written during a global pandemic with a world on fire. While researching and writing, I lost kin to illness and suicide, as well as community in a mass shooting at my neighborhood grocery store. My home was evacuated due to wildfire risk. I transitioned to working online with an elementary-aged child learning remotely. My child contracted (though survived) COVID before vaccines were available. Then I moved my aging and ailing parents across country into my neighborhood. Both of my parents required visits to the emergency ward in the first week. At least three times I left my mother's bedside to interview someone and return. My mother died while I slept on the floor next to her. From all these experiences and more, I do not take for granted being alive, let alone writing a book again. Surviving such tumultuous times and creating books is made possible only through the labor and the love of many, whom I acknowledge here, even as these words do not do their significance justice.

I am indebted to the people who talked with me on the podcast *Communicating Care* before it had an RSS feed: H.E. Prof. Judi Wakhungu, James Wakibia, Emy Kane, Dr. Shahriar Hossain, Michelle Gabrieloff-Parish, Nancy Bui, José Toscano Bravo, and Joe Andenmatten. At the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder), Mia Ives-Rublee's podcast was recorded live, cosponsored by the Dean's Fund in the College of Media, Communication, and Information (CMCI) and the Department of Environmental Studies, with publicity support from Disability Services and Ethnic Studies. This book wouldn't be half of what it has become without those conversations. Consent to interviews doesn't mean those interviewed agree with everything I've written. My hope, however, is that their lessons are palpable. As I consider each podcast a master class from people who

continue to do the work to make the world a better place despite the odds, I recommend listening to the longer conversations at <https://communicatingcare.buzzsprout.com>.

Part of the gift of teaching is that I constantly meet new people from whom I learn. Over the years, my undergraduate students have convinced me to take ocean conservation, digital activism, and plastic pollution more seriously. Likewise, former and current graduate students have provided generative conversations about care, climate, colonialism, disability justice, hashtag activism, incarceration, nonhuman kin, oppression, waste, and water, particularly Lindsey Badger, Ali Branscombe, Warren Cook, E Cram, Catalina de Onís, Jake Dionne, Suz Enck, Logan Rae Gomez, Constance Gordon, Jeremy Gordon, Joe Hatfield, Amani Husain, Yesim Kaptan, Martin Law, Katie Lind, Myles Mason, Cole McGuffey, Norma Musih, Jo Marras Tate, Hunter Thompson, Mikayla Torres, Darrel Wanzer-Serrano, Rachel Vaughn, Isaac West, Bri Wiens, and Kelly Wilz. Gratitude also to Tim Schütz, who has become a rejuvenating interlocutor about the Formosa Plastics Global Archive at the University of California Irvine, research ethics, and digital media.

While finishing the initial manuscript, I enrolled as a student in a six-week online Bennington College class titled “Beyond Plastics,” which was taught by the former regional administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency under the Obama administration, founder and president of the NGO Beyond Plastic, Professor Judith Enck. This experience allowed me to learn from her as well as participate in an extended online intergenerational exchange of over one hundred students. In addition to her content expertise, Enck provides a wonderful model of pedagogical generosity, calling in new waves of advocates and embodying a joyful mix of humor with intersectional awareness and pragmatic political advice. Plastic studies researchers and advocates more broadly continue to teach and inspire me on social media.

My mentors keep retiring but have checked in and taught me over the years. A humble and passionate environmental advocate and mentor, Robbie Cox continues to be generous as a textbook coauthor; his partner, Julia T. Wood, shares honest and insightful interpersonal advice. D. Soyini Madison and Lawrence Grossberg still shape my worldview. Since I moved to Boulder, Jerry Hauser has provided deeply grounding and insightful counsel on professional life and the good life.

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My partner, Ted, has witnessed all of it—my professional heartbreaks and achievements, familial joys and losses, health complications and nourishing

meals, mundane juggling acts and unforeseen traumas, and the dozen other book ideas I proposed on our road trips but didn't write over the past decade. Staying together despite our differences and being able to make you laugh with all that is going on professionally and personally feels like a miracle. Thank you for stepping up and still caring.

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