**Culture**

Cultural Values: Hot and Cold Climate Cultures

Cultures can be basically divided into two camps: hot-climate and cold-climate. Each culture has different values that are expressed in daily living and how one relates to life, oneself, and one another. For this reason members of a different culture can experience frustration and conflict in differing cultures. If we can come to recognize and understand what other cultures value, then we can work to avoid conflict and work towards effective communication and fruitful relationships.

Definitions and Differences to know:

1. **Hot-climate cultures** – cultures that are “relationship-based.” They are *generally* found in warmer climates though there are exceptions. Examples include most Latin American countries, parts of Africa and Alaska.
2. **Cold-climate cultures** – cultures that are “task-oriented.” They are *generally* found in colder climates, with exceptions. Examples include the northern United States, Western Europe and Israel.

Throughout this discussion, be thinking about where you stand. Put a star next to each category you fit into. The goal here is to BE HONEST. Everyone falls into different categories – even under the same area!

| HOT-CLIMATE CULTURES | COLD-CLIMATE CULTURES |
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| **Communication and Respect Issues** | |
| *Relationship motivated* | *Task motivated* |
| 1. Communication must create a “feel good” atmosphere 2. Therefore communication must contribute to this atmosphere by not offending another 3. Speech may not seek to communicate information, but relationship. “Yes” is not always “yes.” 4. Efficiency and time do not take precedence over the person 5. Though individuals may be otherwise, society is feeling-oriented | 1. Communication must provide accurate information 2. Therefore honest communication does not reflect how a person feels about another person (generally) 3. Speech is meant to communicate information, not relationship. “Yes” should be “yes 4. Efficiency and time are high priorities, and taking them seriously is a statement of respect for the other person 5. Though individuals may be otherwise, society is logic-oriented |
| **Identity Issues** | |
| *Group-oriented culture* | *Individualistic culture* |
| 1. Identity found in the group 2. Group protects and provides for the individual 3. Behavior reflects on the entire group 4. Team members expect direction from their leader | 1. Identity found in the self. Values the individual and their opinion 2. Initiative and independence is highly valued 3. Behavior reflects upon the individual, not the group 4. Team members expect to give input on team direction to their leader |

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| **Personal Boundary Issues** | |
| *Inclusion cultures* | *Privacy cultures* |
| 1. Individuals are included in conversation, meals, and the other activities of the group. Violating this injures the one who seeks inclusion 2. Property is public 3. It's not good to be by yourself | 1. Relational boundaries are set and maintained. Violating these injures the one who set them 2. Private property is accepted and responsibility for it is on the steward / owner 3. It's okay to be by yourself |
| **Hospitality** | |
| *Hospitality is spontaneous* | *Hospitality is serious and planned* |
| 1. Host takes care of everything 2. A gift is expected 3. Travelers are taken in and provided for | 1. Travelers expected to make own other than what is communicated to host ahead of time 2. Guess are expected to pay in a restaurant unless offered by the host 3. Hospitality is a special occasion |
| **Time Management** | |
| *Not as time-oriented* | *Time-oriented* |
| 1. Event oriented, but recognize some structure is necessary in some parts of life 2. Spontaneous and flexible 3. Experiencing the moment more important than saving time | 1. Structured 2. Enjoy time efficiency 3. Time is a precious commodity |

*Based upon: Lanier, Sarah A., Foreign to Familiar. McDougal Publishing: Hagerstown. 2000.*

Cross-Cultural Communication

**Be a Learner**

Go with the heart attitude of being a servant. Nationals easily recognize and resist an outsider who has his own agenda. In contrast, the servant heart is unmistakable to all, and opens the door to effective communication and ministry. Begin as a learner. Experts recommend that cross-cultural communicators first assume a role as a learner (rather than a teacher, seller, or accuser).

**Be an Observer**

Observe things in the culture. It’s important to see what is seen and what is unseen … touch, smell, taste. Using all senses enables you to better understand the culture that you are in.

Observation is not limited to the perception of material things alone; also perceive behavior and attitudes (i.e., the ways people relate to each other, emotions, non-verbal communication, etc.). For example, in Turkey a no can be communicated with a click of the tongue, a yes with the blink of an eye. In Indonesia, all transactions are completed with the right hand, never the left.

Cultural Cues

1. Dress – how, in what roles, occasions?
2. Eating – how?
3. Joking – with whom, how? Is laughter accepted, or giggles? For example, Koreans laugh if embarrassed or if scared.
4. Respect – to whom, how, from whom? On what occasions? Where?
5. Where to go and not to go, when?
6. Subjects to discuss, not to discuss.
7. Vocabulary – what is acceptable, where, when, with whom?
8. Eye contact.
9. Physical stance.
10. Physical proximity.
11. Use of hands.
12. Physical contact – where, who with?
13. Display of affection – how, when, with whom?
14. Display of emotion.
15. Taking precedence over others – who, when, why?
16. Punctuality – how late is late? Business, social?
17. Who associates with whom – sex, age?
18. Roles of men and women.
19. Friendship – how manifested, how given and received?
20. Hospitality – meaning, where practiced, who is involved and how?
21. Privacy – when allowed, when discouraged.
22. Authority – how manifested, how do people relate to it?

Cross-Cultural Questions

This is an excellent exercise for team members to do in preparation for their trip. Assign them 10 to 20 of these questions to be used in interviewing someone from another culture. Instruct them to find an international friend, explain that they want to learn about other cultures, and ask permission to interview the person.

1. What kind of government does your host country have? Can you name people prominent in the country’s affairs (politics, athletics, religion, the arts, etc.)?
2. Who are the country’s national heroes and heroines? Can you recognize the national anthem?
3. What is your host country’s attitude towards trash? The environment? Conservation of resources?
4. Are other languages spoken besides the dominant language? What are the social and political implications of language usage?
5. What is the predominant religion? Is it a state religion? Are they tolerant of other religions? Have you read any of its sacred writings?
6. What are the most important religious observations and ceremonies? How regularly do people participate in them?
7. How are animals treated? Are there household pets? Which animals are household pets?
8. What are the most common forms of marriage ceremonies and celebrations?
9. What is the attitude toward divorce? Extra-marital relations? Plural marriage?
10. What is the attitude toward gambling? Toward drinking? Toward drugs?
11. Do women work outside the home? In professional jobs?
12. Is the price asked for merchandise fixed, or are customers expected to bargain? How is the bargaining conducted?
13. If, as a customer, you touch or handle merchandise for sale, will the storekeeper think you are knowledgeable? Inconsiderate? Within your rights? Completely outside your rights? Other?
14. How do people organize their daily activities? What is the normal meal schedule? Is there a daytime rest period? What is the customary time for visiting friends?
15. What foods are most popular and how are they prepared? Who sits down together for meals? Who is served first?
16. What is the usual dress for women? For men? Are slacks and/or shorts worn? If so, on what occasions? Do teenagers wear jeans?
17. If you are invited to dinner, should you arrive early? On time? Late? If late, how late? Is being on time an important consideration in keeping doctor’s appointments? Business appointments?
18. On what occasions would you present (or accept) gifts to/from people in the country? What kinds of gifts would you exchange?
19. Do some flowers have a particular significance?
20. How do people greet one another? Shake hands? Embrace or kiss? How do they separate or take leave of one another? What does any variation from the usual greeting or parting salutations signify?
21. Can women vote? Travel alone? Drive a car?
22. What are the important holidays? How is each observed?
23. What are the favorite leisure and recreational activities of adults? Children? Teenagers? Are the sexes separated in these activities? Where are these activities held?
24. What is the attitude towards adoption? Beggars? The homeless?
25. What kinds of television programs are shown? What social purposes do they serve?
26. What is the normal work schedule? Is it important to be on time?
27. How are children disciplined at home? At school? Are they catered to?
28. Are children usually present at social occasions? At ceremonial occasions? If they are not present, how are they cared for in the absence of their parents?
29. What kind of public transportation is available? Do all classes of people use it?
30. Who has the right of way in traffic? Vehicles? Animals? Pedestrians?
31. How many people have emigrated from this country to the United States? Other countries? Are many doing so at present?
32. Are there many American expatriates living in this country? Where do they live?
33. What kinds of health services are available? Where are they located?
34. What are the common home remedies for minor ailments? Where can medicines be purchased?
35. Is education free? Compulsory? Are girls encouraged to attend high school? College?
36. In schools, are children segregated by race? By caste? By class? By sex?