



# Managing Across Cultures

SwissContact

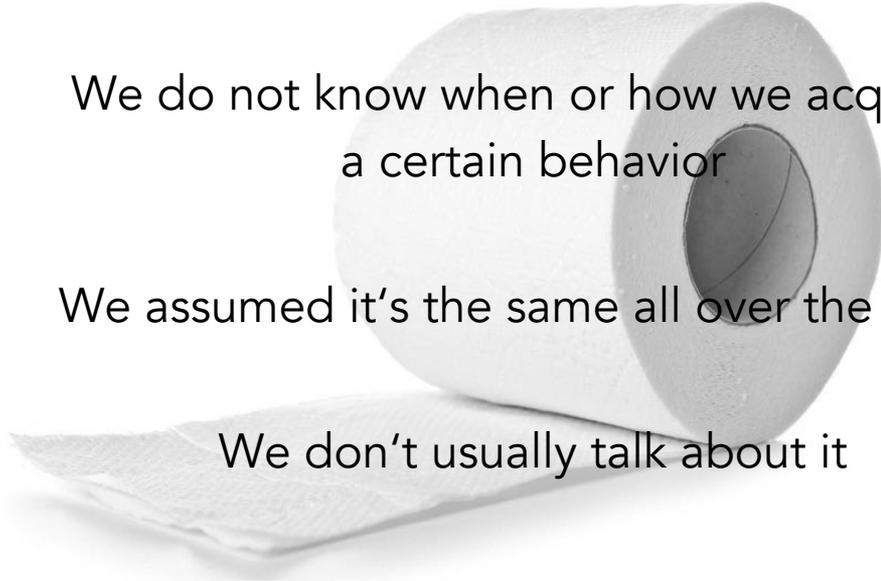
September 6, 2019

# Toilet Paper

We do not know when or how we acquired  
a certain behavior

We assumed it's the same all over the world

We don't usually talk about it



# The Cross Cultural Framework



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BE **A**WARE



# Fundamentally different



# Summary

## HUMAN NATURE

COMMON GENETIC HERITAGE OF HUMANKIND

NEED OF FOOD  
SHELTER AND NURTURING  
LOVE OF CHILDREN  
GRIEVE OVER LOSS OF LOVED ONES ETC.



## CULTURE

LEARNED & ACQUIRED BY HUMAN BEINGS  
NO GENETIC INPUT



## PERSONALITY

TRAITS THAT ARE UNIQUE TO AN INDIVIDUAL  
PARTLY GENETIC, PARTLY LEARNED  
CERTAIN PERSONALITIES  
THRIVE BETTER THAN OTHERS  
IN A GIVEN CULTURE

# Definition

## BEHAVIOR:

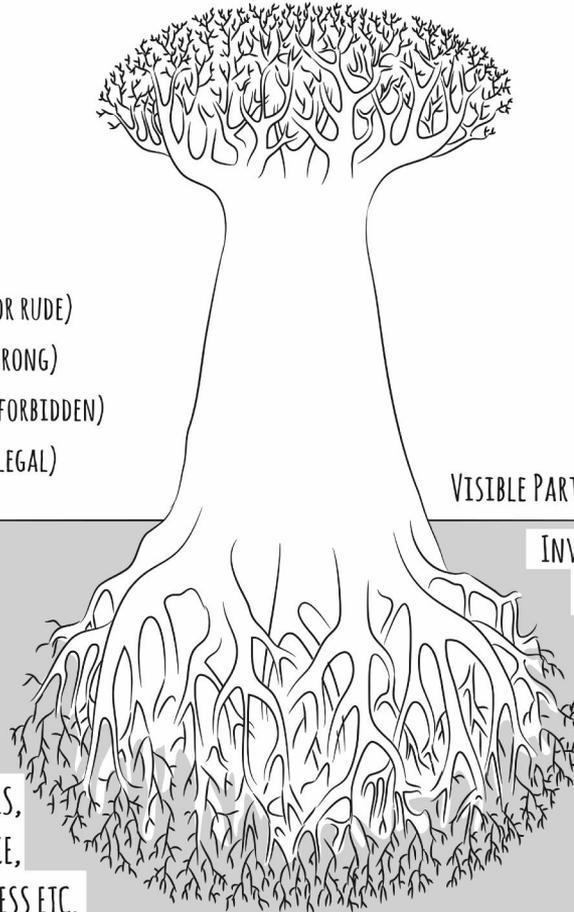
FOOD, ART, DRESS,  
LANGUAGE ETC.

## NORMS:

FOLKWAYS (RIGHT OR RUDE)  
MORES (RIGHT OR WRONG)  
TABOOS (RIGHT OR FORBIDDEN)  
LAWS (RIGHT OR ILLEGAL)

## VALUES:

CONCEPT OF TIME,  
HUMOUR,  
GENDER ROLES,  
SOCIAL HIERARCHIES,  
STRUCTURE OF SPACE,  
RULES OF CLEANLINESS ETC.



VISIBLE PART OF CULTURE

INVISIBLE PART  
OF CULTURE

# Definition

## BEHAVIOR:

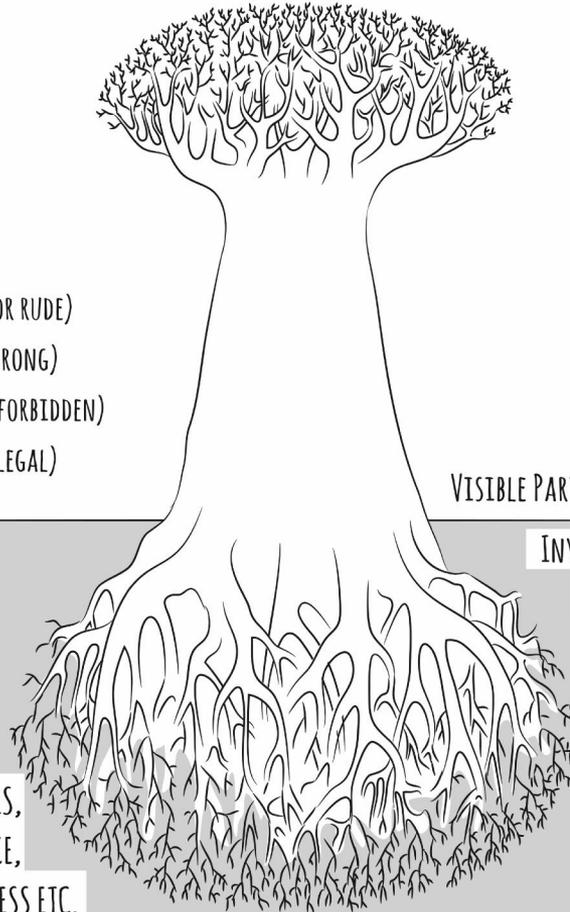
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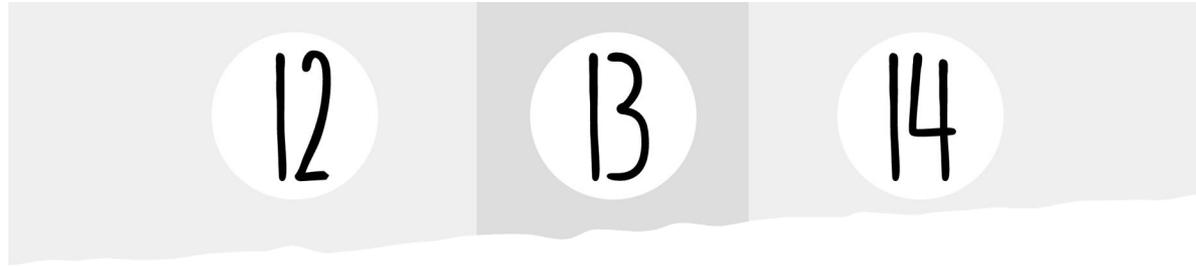
You may try to change this.

Don't even think,  
that good marketing  
can change this!

# Example

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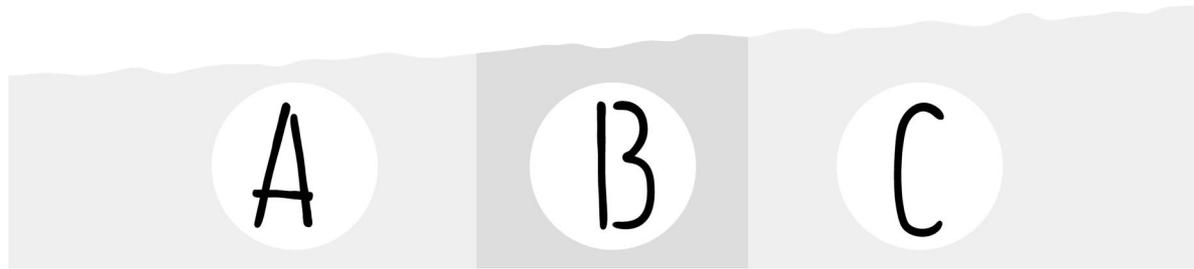
# Example



# Example

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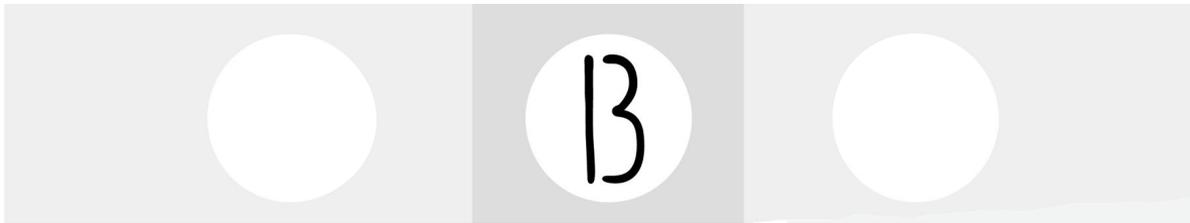
# Example



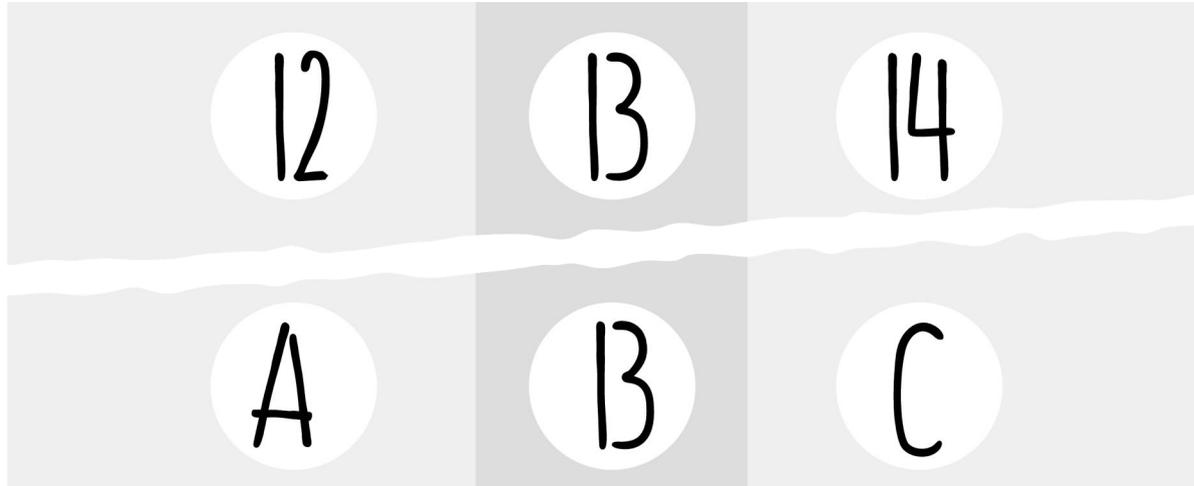
# Example

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# Example



# Example



# Frame of Interpretation

Culture provides its society a common framework to interpret the daily facts of life.

The same facts, may have different significations, according to the cultural framework.

## **Example: an early concession in negotiations**

For a Swiss manager: a sign of goodwill to engage in a long term partnership, it is usually answered by a concession.

For a Russian manager: a sign of weakness, it is usually answered by a toughening of the position.

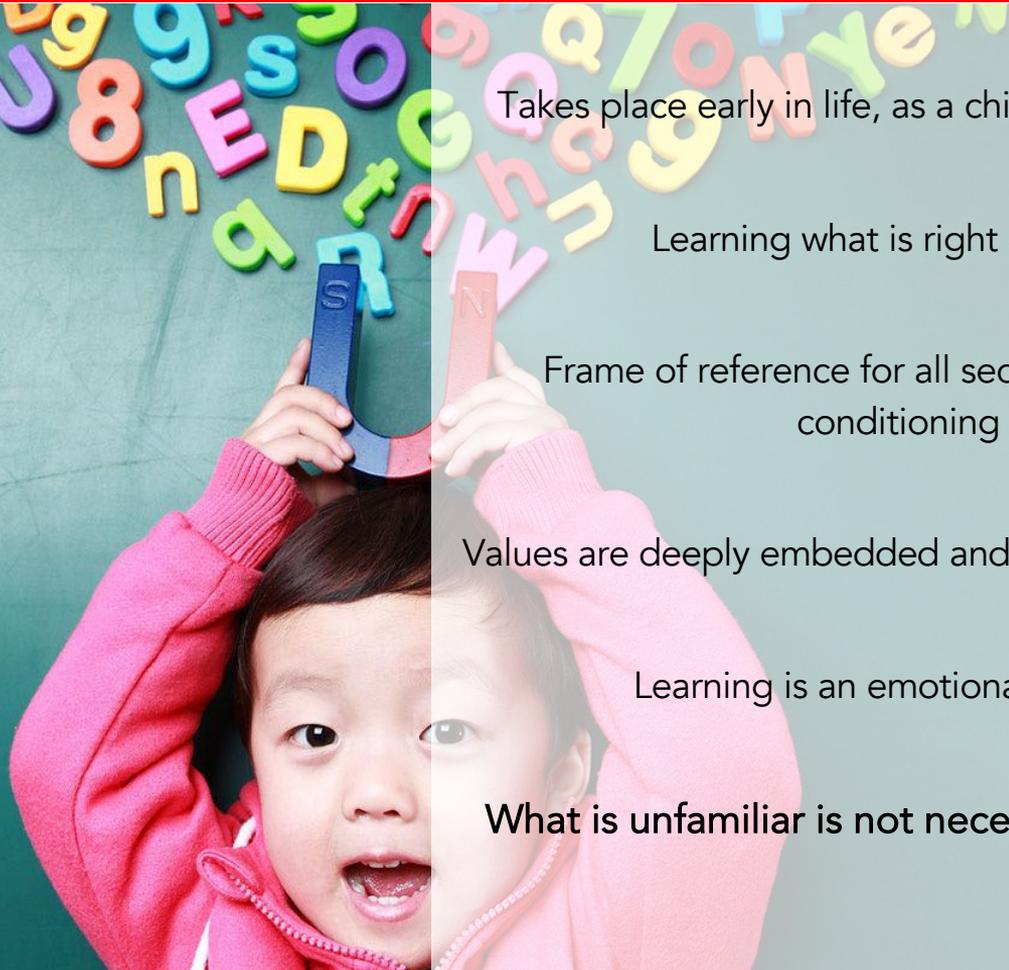


**When it comes to culture,  
facts may not settle differences!**

# Primary Cultural Conditioning



# Primary Socialization



Takes place early in life, as a child and adolescent

Learning what is right & wrong

Frame of reference for all secondary cultural conditioning

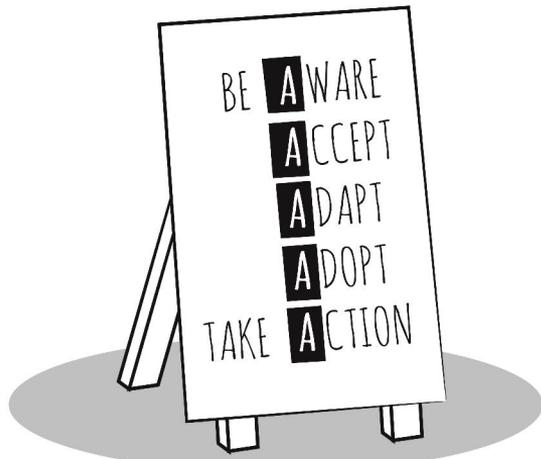
Values are deeply embedded and cannot be changed

Learning is an emotional process

**What is unfamiliar is not necessarily unnatural.**



**When it comes to culture,  
your emotions and your body may fool you!**



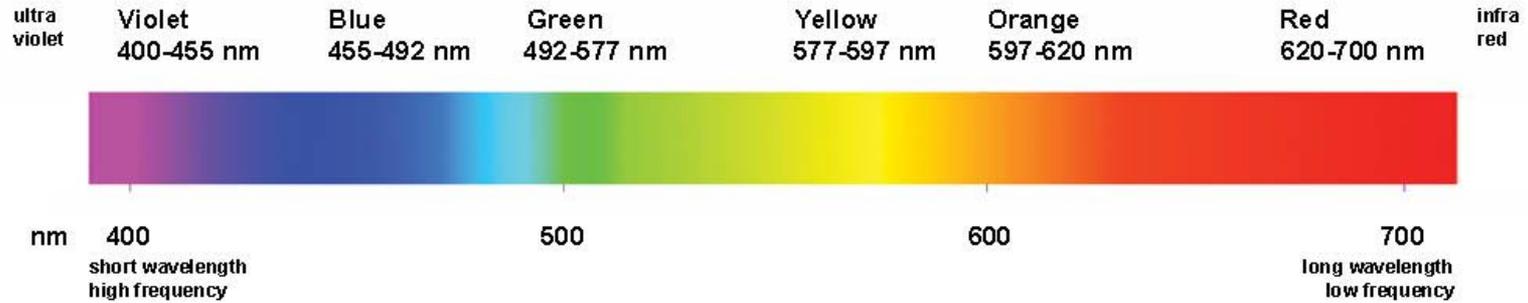
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# BE **A**WARE

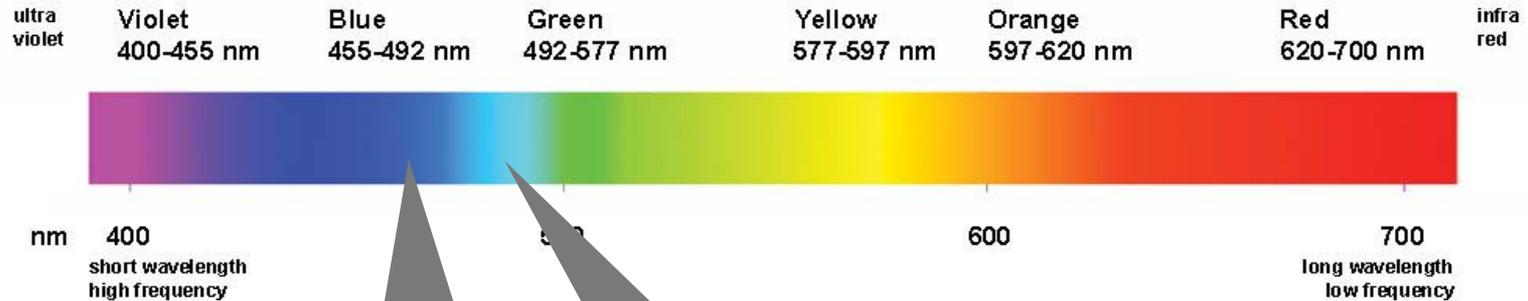
A Journey through  
Cultural Differences



# Perception of colors



# Perception of colors



сі́ний

(siniy)  
for the darker  
blue

голубо́й

(goluboy)  
for the lighter  
blue

# Seeing



# What is a family?



## Europe

a man and a woman, united by love and their children

## Many African societies

three or more generations, where age is more important than paternity

## Japan

a man and a woman, united by an economic union with the purpose to raise children.

## China

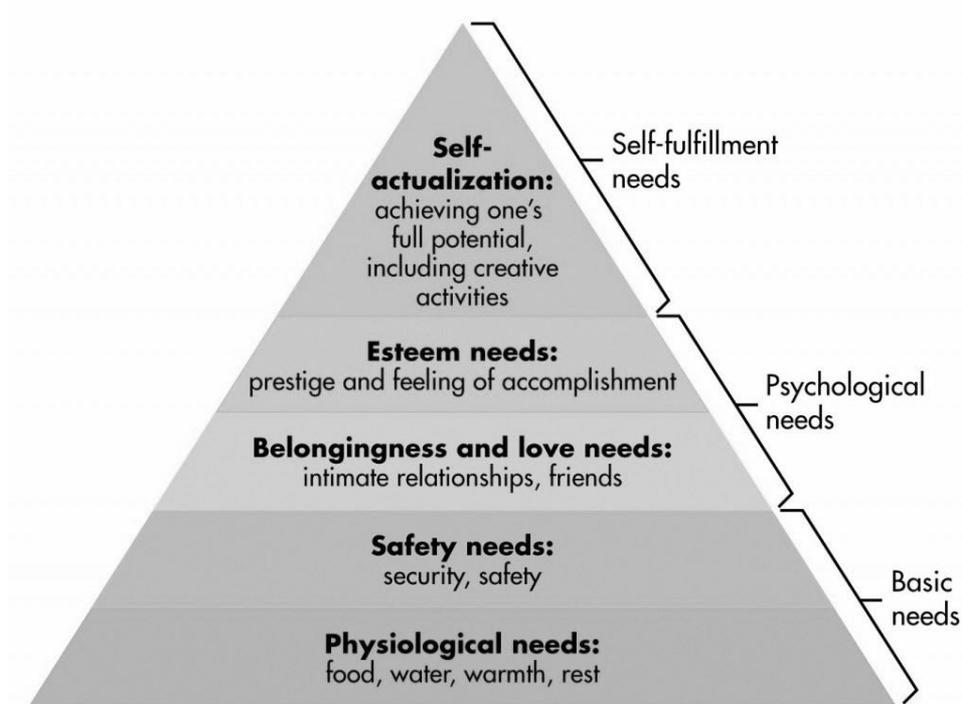
a man and woman, matched by income, assets and horoscope, uniting two families to raise children.

## Inuit

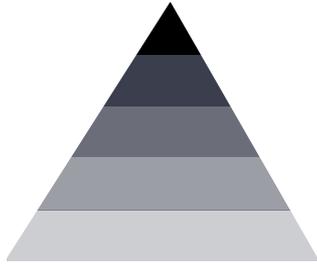
a man, a woman and their children, whereas the woman may live with another husband (for instance during hunting season) and may share bed with visitors.

# Motivation

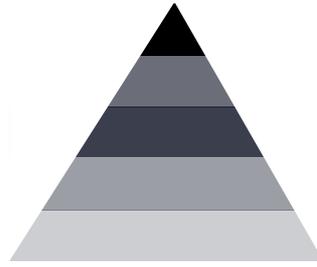
Maslow's hierarchy: a reality?



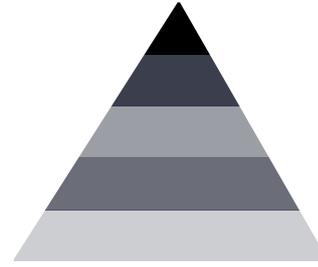
# Motivation



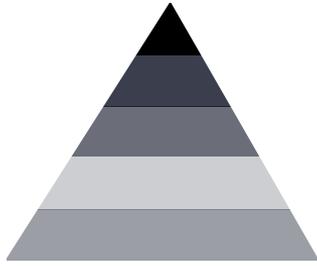
USA



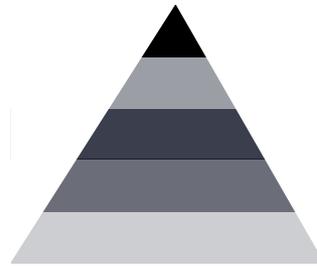
Mexico



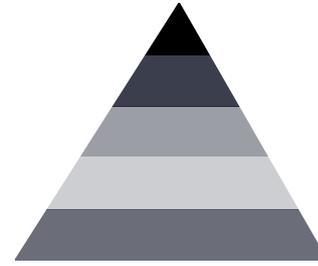
Japan



Turkey



Puerto Rico



Yugoslavia

# Top Work Values



Hard work	1	Freedom of expression
Respect for learning	2	Personal freedom
Honesty	3	Self-reliance
Openness to new ideas	4	Individual rights
Accountability	5	Hard work
Self-discipline	6	Personal achievement
Self-reliance	7	Thinking for oneself

# Leadership

## CULTURAL CLUSTERS AND DESIRED LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS

REGION	RELATIVE IMPORTANCE (IN DESCENDING ORDER)*
EASTERN EUROPE	○ AL   × SPL   👑 CVBL   👤 TOL   👤 HOL   ▼ PL
LATIN AMERICA	👑 CVBL   👤 TOL   × SPL   ▼ PL   👤 HOL   ○ AL
LATIN EUROPE	👑 CVBL   👤 TOL   ▼ PL   × SPL   👤 HOL   ○ AL
CONFUCIAN ASIA	× SPL   👤 TOL   👤 HOL   👑 CVBL   ○ AL   ▼ PL
NORDIC EUROPE	👑 CVBL   ▼ PL   👤 TOL   ○ AL   👤 HOL   × SPL
ANGLO	👑 CVBL   ▼ PL   👤 HOL   👤 TOL   ○ AL   × SPL
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	👤 HOL   👑 CVBL   👤 TOL   ▼ PL   × SPL   ○ AL
SOUTHERN ASIA	× SPL   👑 CVBL   👤 HOL   👤 TOL   ○ AL   ▼ PL
GERMANIC EUROPE	○ AL   👑 CVBL   ▼ PL   👤 HOL   👤 TOL   × SPL
MIDDLE EAST	× SPL   👤 HOL   ○ AL   👑 CVBL   👤 TOL   ▼ PL

\* SIX GLOBAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS:

👑 CVBL	CHARISMATIC/VALUE-BASED LEADERSHIP	👤 HOL	HUMANE-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP
👤 TOL	TEAM-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP	○ AL	AUTONOMOUS LEADERSHIP
▼ PL	PARTICIPATE LEADERSHIP	× SPL	SELF-PROTECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Different cultures favor different leadership behavior.

The study also showed that “integrity” (trustworthy, just and honest) is the most universal attribute for leadership.



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**A**CCCEPT



# ACCEPT

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Accept that people think or act differently.



Be proud of being „different“ instead of being „superior“.



# Learning to **A**cept

1.

Don't judge

2.

3.

4.



## Best countries to live in:

Norway	or	South Africa
Switzerland		Ghana
USA		Greece
The Netherlands		Italy
Australia		Brazil
Sweden		United Kingdom

# Learning to **A**cept

1.

Don't judge

2.

3.

4.

**Best countries to live in:**

Norway  
Switzerland  
USA  
The Netherlands  
Australia  
Sweden

**or**

South Africa  
Ghana  
Greece  
Italy  
Brazil  
United Kingdom



**Income per  
capita**



**Suicide rate**

# Learning to **A**cept

1.

Don't judge

2.

Accept ambiguity

3.

4.



# Learning to **A**ccept

1.

Don't judge

2.

Accept ambiguity

3.

Live active tolerance

4.



# Learning to Accept

1.

Don't judge

2.

Accept ambiguity

3.

Live active tolerance

4.



## Active Tolerance



Be respectful of other viewpoints...



Actively try to understand them...



Accept that different life experience lead to  
different interpretation of the same facts...



....and still maintain your differing opinion.



# Learning to **A**cept

1.

Don't judge

2.

Accept ambiguity

3.

Live active tolerance

4.

Explain yourself



**Explain yourself...**



**...and do it face to face**



7% of communication is verbal

35% is tone of voice

58% is body language



Emails miss 93% of the communication



Phones miss 58% of the communication



# Learning how to Accept

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**1.**

Don't judge

**2.**

Accept ambiguity

**3.**

Live active tolerance

**4.**

Explain yourself



Learning how to  
**A**DAPT

# ADAPT

---



Sometimes Accepting will not be enough.  
You will have to adapt your behavior.



Adaption is very difficult when certain behaviors are in  
contradiction to your own values (as eating insects)



Adaptation is strongly advised or even mandatory where  
behavior is regulated by norms.



# Learning to **A**dapt

1.

Seeking the “Why”

2.

Most behavior is rational within the framework of interpretation given by a culture.

3.

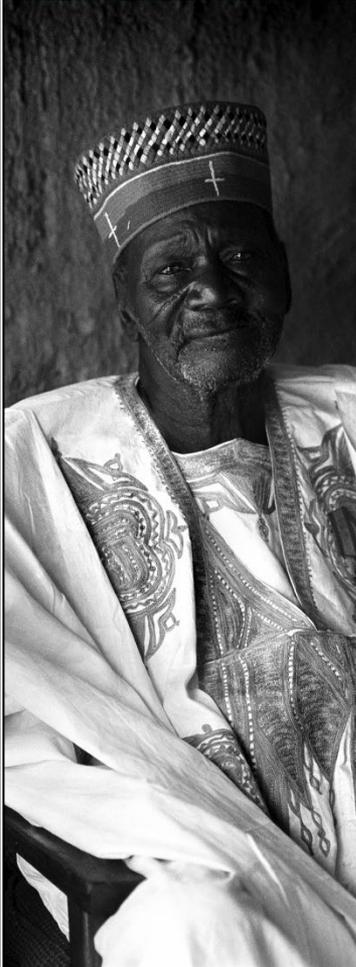
In order to survive the human brain has been conditioned to act rationally in order to survive.

■

If you are confronted with seemingly irrational behavior: Just ask “**Why**”

# Learning to Adapt

1. Seeking the “Why”
- 2.
- 3.



■  
...and here is the reason why:  
■

The Mossi drank the poison because he comes from a strong **collectivist culture** (the survival of the group is more important than the survival of the individual) and from a culture with a strong **external locus of control** (fate decides who should live and who should die, there is no point in fighting against fate).  
■

# Learning to Adapt

1.

Seeking the “Why”

2.

Creating Analogies

3.



Analogies are powerful images that assist your mind in quickly adapting your mental model to certain situations.

A simplified view, but easier to navigate (like Google Maps Street vs. Satellite View)

Careful: They are not always correct.

# Learning to Adapt

## Negotiation Style and Tactics

1.

Seeking the "Why"

2.

Creating Analogies

3.



**Individualism & High UA**  
Germanic Europe, Nordic Europe,  
Anglo



**Individualism & Low UA**  
Eastern Europe, Latin Europe



**Collectivism & STO**  
Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa,  
Latin America, Southern Asia



**Collectivism & LTO**  
Confucian Asia

# Learning to Adapt

1.

Seeking the “Why”

2.

Creating Analogies

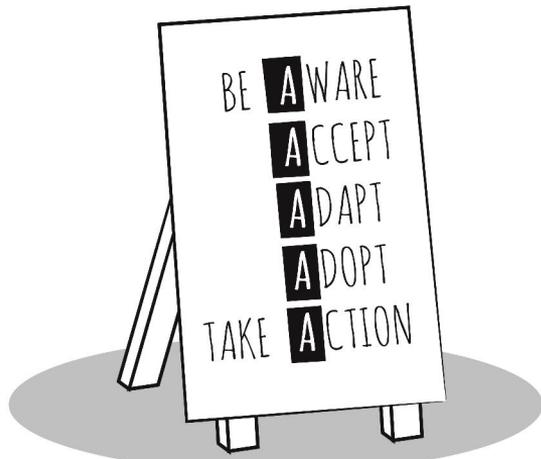
3.

Change Perspective

Empathy is the most important personality trait for cross cultural management.

It means getting “into the feelings” of another person, to put yourself in someone else’s shoes

Imagine how you would react if.....



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# TAKE **A**CTION

LEARNING & SHARING



# Learning a Culture



- Language
- History
- Religion
-

# Why learn the language



■  
To understand each other  
(but English may be the easier option)

■  
To learn the culture

■  
To show respect



# Religious influence on Accounting

Christianity splits the world in „sacred“ and „profane“.

Money was regarded as “profane” based on Matthew 6:24 „You can not serve both God and money“.

Accounting was seen as harmful to the church

Islam teaches that all should be done according to religious acts.

The Quran advices to keep account of transactions in Albaqarah, Verse 282.

Accounting is highly regarded within the Islamic culture and religion prescribes standards

(No interest, redistribution to poors, full disclosure in financial statements)

# Learning History



■ Helps understanding the culture of your business partner.

■ Shows genuine interest and respect for your host culture.

■ Every country is proud of its past.  
History largely defines national identity.

■ History needs to be learned from the perspective of your host culture.



# History is Subjective



■  
**American** textbooks emphasize the tragedy of the event and the aftermath of America coming together as a country and supporting one another.

■  
**Indian** and **Brazilian** textbooks focus on the audacity of the United States and its actions post-9/11 and the illegality of the war, specifically the Iraq War.

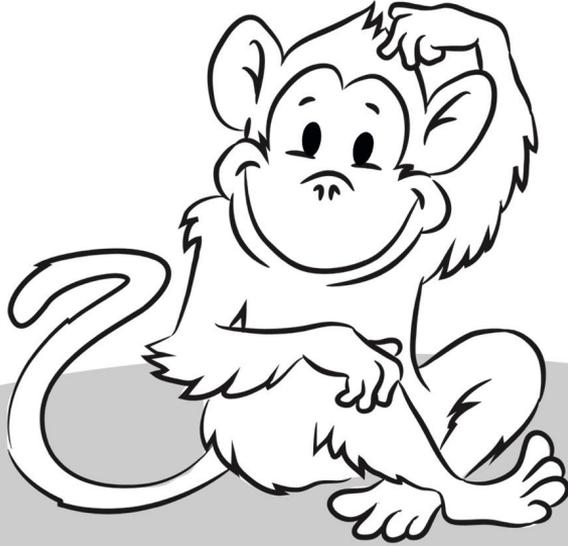
■  
In **Pakistan**, the textbooks completely omit the identity of the assailants, calling them “unidentified terrorists,” while Turkey also omits their extremist Islamic faith.

■  
**China’s** textbooks mostly speak about 9/11 as a sign of diminishing American hegemony.

# Share Time and Food with Local Friends



# Thank You



**BE AWARE**  
RECOGNIZE  
YOUR MONKEY  
MOMENTS

**ACCEPT**  
BE A FRIENDLY MONKEY  
DON'T JUDGE  
ACCEPT AMBIGUITY  
ACTIVE TOLERANCE  
EXPLAIN YOURSELF

**ADAPT**  
CHANGE YOUR BEHAVIOR  
SEEK THE „WHY“  
CREATE ANALOGIES  
USE STEREOTYPES WISELY  
CHANGE PERSPECTIVE

**ADOPT**  
CHANGE YOUR VALUES AND NORMS  
LET IT HAPPEN!  
BE YOUR NEW YOURSELF

**TAKE ACTION:**  
LEARNING  
LEARN LANGUAGE  
LEARN RELIGION  
LEARN HISTORY

**TAKE ACTION:**  
SHARING  
SEEK FRIENDS  
SHARE FOOD  
LOOK FOR YOUR  
ZOOKEEPER

