

Adapting to Others: Bridging Culture and Gender Differences

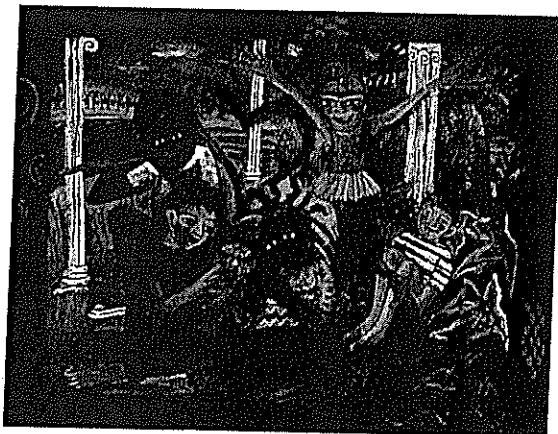
CHAPTER OUTLINE

Ethically Adapt Your Communication to Others
Culture and Communication
Gender and Communication
Barriers to Bridging Differences and Adapting to Others
Adapting to Others Who Are Different from You
Summary

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to

1. Define culture.
2. Describe, compare, and contrast high-context and low-context cultures.
3. Describe five cultural values.
4. Identify differences and similarities between male and female communication patterns.
5. Describe the importance of gender within the larger context of culture.
6. Understand how gender relates to content and relational approaches to communication.
7. Illustrate five barriers that inhibit communication between individuals.
8. Describe six strategies that will help bridge differences between people and help them adapt to differences.



There are no ordinary people.

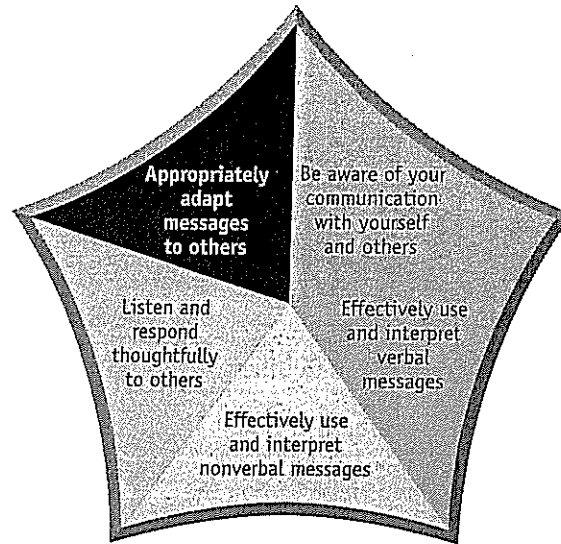
C. S. Lewis

Christian Pierre, Share the World. © SuperStock, Inc.

from: Beebe, S.A et al (2009)

Communication: principles for
a lifetime. Vol 1 Boston, Pearson
pp 177-191

FIGURE 1.6.1
Communication
Principles for a
Lifetime



As C.S. Lewis observed, there are no ordinary people—which implies that each of us is unique. And the not-so-startling fact that people *are* different from one another provides the context for discussion of our final communication principle: *Effective communicators appropriately adapt their messages to others.* We introduce this principle last because often people learn how to adapt only after they have learned the other communication principles. Figure 1.6.1 presents our now-familiar model, which includes this final principle of appropriately adapting to others. Being able to adapt to others suggests that you already have a sense of who you are and a consciousness of the presence of others—self-awareness and other-awareness, the components of the first principle we presented. We learn to use verbal and nonverbal messages as infants, though it may take several years to develop sophistication in using language and nonverbal symbols. Hearing and listening also develop early in our lives. Studies in developmental communication suggest that the ability to appropriately adapt our behavior to others evolves after we have become aware that there is a “me,” after we have learned to use verbal and nonverbal symbols to communicate, and after we have developed an ability to hear and listen to others. To adapt to others requires a relatively sophisticated understanding of the communication process.

One of life’s unprofound principles with profound implications for human communication is this: *We each have different backgrounds and experiences.*¹ As you learned in Chapter 1.2, we each see, hear, and experience the world differently. To some degree, we are each estranged from others.

In a world of ever-increasing tensions and conflict arising from differences in culture, religious beliefs, and political ideologies, being able to understand and appropriately adapt to others is of vital importance. When differences are

heightened by attitudes of superiority and beliefs about being divinely ordained to dominate others, violence is the typical result.

The greater our differences in background, experience, religion, and culture, the more difficult it is for us to interpret verbal and nonverbal symbols and to listen accurately to the messages of others, and the more challenging it is to adapt messages to others. When we meet someone for the first time, we often try to determine whether we have people, places, or backgrounds in common. It is usually easier to develop a relationship with someone who is similar to us rather than dissimilar.

The goal of this chapter is to identify culture and gender differences that may inhibit communication with others and to suggest adaptive strategies that can improve the quality and effectiveness of our communication with others. Throughout the first five chapters, we have noted in our discussions (and in the Diversity and Communication boxed feature) that culture and gender differences affect our communication with others. In this chapter we examine in more detail the influence of these differences on our lives and suggest some communication strategies for bridging these differences in our relationships with others.

As we focus on culture and gender differences and how to adapt to them, we will discuss the nature of culture and gender, identify barriers that stem from culture and gender differences, and suggest strategies that can help you better understand, appreciate, and adapt to people who are not just like you. Our premise: In order to live comfortably in the twenty-first century, we must learn ways to appreciate and understand culture and gender differences, rather than ignore them, suffer because of them, or wish they would disappear. But simply understanding that there are differences is not enough to improve communication; it is important to learn how to use effective communication skills to adapt to those differences.

Even though the focus of this chapter is on culture and gender differences, realize that these are only two of many differences that can divide people. Differences in age (sometimes called the generation gap), socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and even in height, weight, or clothing choices have created tension between people in the past and probably will in the future. The principle of adapting to others is applicable to virtually all communication situations. The ideas and strategies for bridging differences in culture or gender that we suggest at the end of this chapter apply to other differences that create conflict and tension. The challenge is not to let our differences create a chasm so large that we can't find ways to ethically adapt our communication to create shared meaning.



Ethically Adapt Your Communication to Others

The key principle of adapting to others that we propose in this chapter does not mean that you only do or say what others expect or that your primary goal

in life is always to please others. You have a responsibility to ethically adapt your messages to others. To be ethical is to be truthful and honest while also observing the rights of others. Ethical communication is communication that is responsible, honest, and fair, that enhances human dignity, and that maintains listener options rather than coerces or forces someone to behave against his or her will. When we encourage you to adapt your messages to others, we are not recommending that you become a spineless jellyfish and say things only to make others happy. It would be unethical to abandon your own ethical principles and only communicate to please others. Such placating behavior is neither wise nor effective; it would also violate the principles of ethical communication.

Effective communicators are *appropriate* communicators—they are sensitive to others' needs while also communicating to enhance the probability that the message expressed will be the message interpreted. To be an appropriate communicator is to express your ideas in ways that fit the time, place, and situation.

Adapting your communication to others also does not mean that you manipulate a conversation so that only *you* can accomplish your goals. Ideally both (or all) parties' goals are met. We do not advocate a form of adapted communication that is false or manipulative. Whether you are in an interpersonal interaction, a group, or a presentational speaking situation, adapting your message to others makes common sense. Even so, being sensitive to others and wisely adapting behaviors to others are often not so common.



Culture and Communication

Overheard from a student before class:

I've had it with all this cultural diversity and gender stuff. It seems like every textbook in every class is obsessed with it. My music appreciation class is trying to force the music of other cultures down my throat. What's wrong with Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms? In English lit, all we're reading is stuff by people from different countries. And it seems my history prof talks only about obscure people I've never heard of before. I'm tired of all this politically correct nonsense. I mean, we're all Americans, aren't we? We're not going off to live in Africa, China, or India. Why don't they just teach us what we need to know and cut all this diversity garbage?

Have you heard this kind of sentiment expressed before? Perhaps you've encountered this kind of "diversity backlash" among some of your classmates, or you may harbor this attitude yourself. It may seem unsettling to some that school curricula and textbooks are focusing on issues of culture and gender differences. But these changes are not motivated by an irrational desire to be politically correct. They are taking place because the United States is changing. The Diversity and Communication feature documents how diverse the United States is now and will increasingly become in the future. There is evidence that the trend toward greater diversity will continue.² With this growing diversity comes a heightened awareness that learning about culture and gender differ-

Diversity and Communication

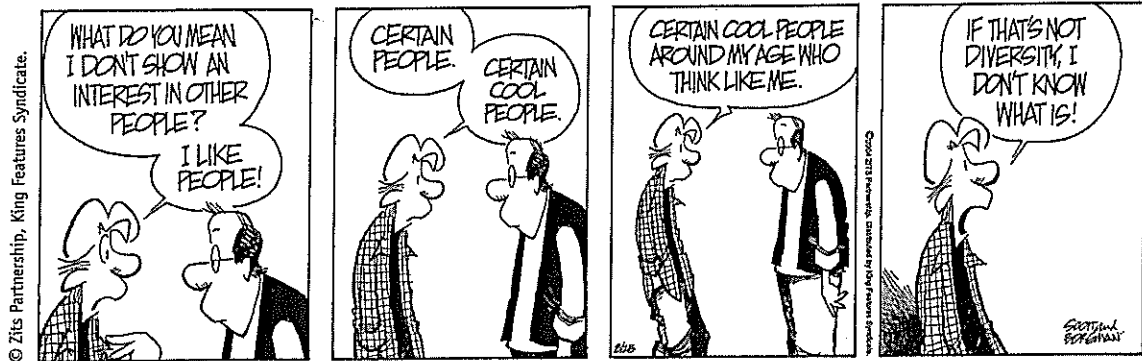
Diversity Almanac

1. Two-thirds of the immigrants on this planet come to the United States.³
2. According to 2000 U.S. Census data, there are more than 35 million people of Hispanic origin in the United States—a 58% gain of 13 million people since 1990.⁴
3. It is estimated that more than 40 million U.S. residents learned something other than English as their first language, including 18 million people for whom Spanish is a first language.⁵
4. Almost one-third of U.S. residents under the age of 35 are members of minority groups, compared with one-fifth of those age 35 or older. According to U.S. Census Bureau population projections, by the year 2025, nearly half of all young adults in this country will come from minority groups.⁶
5. If the current trend continues, by the year 2050 the proportion of the U.S. population of non-Hispanic whites will decrease to 53%, down from a current 72%. Asians will increase to 16%, up from 4.5%; Hispanics will more than double their numbers, to over 25%, up from just over 11.5%; and African Americans will increase their proportion slightly from the current 12%.⁷
6. It is estimated that between 2000 and 2010, Vermont's Asian population will grow by 80%, Arizona's will increase by 52%, and Delaware's will grow by 56%.⁸
7. Between 1995 and 2005, the combined population of African Americans, Native Americans, Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics grew 13 times faster than the non-Hispanic white population.⁹
8. One out of every eight U.S. residents speaks a language other than English at home, and one-third of children in urban U.S. public schools speak a first language other than English.¹⁰
9. For the first time since the 1850s, when California was seized from Mexico, a majority of the babies born in California in 2004 were Hispanic.¹¹
10. Non-Hispanic whites constitute a minority of the population in Texas, New Mexico, and California.¹²
11. Sixty percent of the residents of Miami, Florida, are foreign-born.¹³

ences can affect every aspect of our lives in positive ways. You may not plan to travel the world, but the world is traveling to you. Your employers, teachers, religious leaders, best friends, or romantic partners may have grown up with cultural traditions different from your own. School textbooks and courses are *reflecting* the change, not *initiating* it.

One statistician notes that if the world were a village of 1000 people, the village would have 590 Asians, 123 Africans, 96 Europeans, 84 Latin Americans, 55 members of the former Soviet Union, and 53 North Americans.¹⁴ Clearly, a global economy and the ease with which technology permits us to communicate with others around the world increase the likelihood that you will establish relationships with people who are different from you and who have cultural traditions different from your own. You need not travel abroad to encounter cultural differences; the world is here.

Journalist Thomas Friedman argues that **globalization—the integration of economics and technology that is contributing to a worldwide, interconnected business environment**—is changing the way we work and relate to people around the world.¹⁵ The world is now “flat” rather than round,



suggests Friedman, because if you have a computer connected to the Internet or a cell phone, you can connect with anyone else in the world who also has those technologies. Saying that the world is flat is a metaphor Friedman uses to describe the interconnectedness of people throughout the world. Globalization results in a more competitive, level playing field because individuals have increased access to others with whom they can form entrepreneurial partnerships. Hence, globalization increases the probability that you will communicate with someone today who has a cultural background different from your own.

Friedman notes that during what he calls "Globalization 1.0," the period between Columbus's 1492 voyage and approximately 1800, *countries* were involved in globalization. "Globalization 2.0" was between 1800 and 2000, when *companies* were the globalization leaders. Today, to use Friedman's scheme, we are in "Globalization 3.0," and *individuals* are making contact with other individuals.¹⁶ For example, when you call someone to get technical assistance with your computer or advice on fixing your TV, you are more likely to talk to someone who is in India rather than Indiana. Our point is not to debate the advantages or disadvantages of globalization, but only to suggest that one implication of a "flat" world is that you will increasingly communicate with people who have cultural backgrounds different from your own.

Defining Culture



Culture is a learned system of knowledge, behavior, attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms that is shared by a group of people and shaped from one generation to the next.¹⁷ Communication and culture, says anthropologist Edward T. Hall, are inseparable—you can't talk about one without the other.¹⁸ There is ample evidence that documents the influence of culture on how we work and live.¹⁹ In the broadest sense, culture includes how people think, what they do, and how they use things to sustain their lives. Researcher Geert Hofstede says culture is the "mental software" that helps us understand our world.²⁰ Like the software and operating system in a computer, our culture provides the framework within which we interpret the data and information that enter our life.

Technology and Communication

Adapting to Cultural Differences When Communicating Electronically

It is increasingly likely that you communicate with people who are far away from where you work and live. It's not unusual to have e-mail conversations with people from around the globe. Nor are conference calls or video conferences among people thousands of miles apart rare or surprising. The world is indeed small when it comes to communicating with people from around the globe.

A team of communication researchers points out that when we communicate via e-mail or phone, it takes a bit longer to interpret information about relationships, because often there are fewer nonverbal cues available.¹¹ In the case of e-mail, we can't see or hear the person we're exchanging messages with. With a telephone call, we can hear a person, but we miss facial expressions and body posture information. Even during a video conference, we're not able to see all of a person's body posture or watch everyone participating 100 percent of the time. The potential for misunderstanding, already present because of cultural differences, a key focus of this chapter, is compounded by the lack of nonverbal information that usually provides vital information about the nature of the relationship we have with others.

When nonverbal messages are diminished because we're not communicating with people face to face, it's important to seek other sources of information about



the nature of the relationship with them. Specifically, what should we do?

- First, you may need to be more direct when responding or expressing how you feel; you may need to describe your emotional responses in writing.
- Second, you may need to ask more questions to clarify meanings.
- Third, it may be necessary to do more paraphrasing to confirm that you understand what others are saying.
- Finally, you simply may need to be more patient with others; relationships may take longer to develop because of the diminished nonverbal cues.

Cultures are not static; they change as new information and new technologies modify them. We no longer believe that bathing is unhealthy or that we should use leeches as the primary medical procedure to make us healthy. Through research, we have replaced both of these cultural assumptions with the values of personal hygiene and modern, sophisticated methods of medical care.

Some groups of individuals can best be described as a **co-culture**—a cultural group that exists within a larger culture. Examples of co-cultures in the United States include the Amish and some communities in Appalachia. A person's gender places her or him in one of the co-cultures that researchers have used to analyze and investigate the influence of communication on our relationships with others. We discuss the impact of gender on our communi-



cation in more detail later in the chapter. Gays and lesbians constitute another example of an important co-culture in our society.

Intercultural communication is communication between people who have different cultural traditions. The transactional process of listening and responding to people from different cultural backgrounds can be challenging. As we stressed earlier, the greater the difference in culture between two people, the greater the potential for misunderstanding and mistrust. That's why it is important to understand the nature of culture and how cultural differences influence our communication with others. Such understanding helps us develop strategies to make connections and adapt to others with different "mental software."

When you encounter a culture that has little in common with your own, you may experience **culture shock**, a sense of confusion, anxiety, stress, and loss.²² If you are visiting or actually living in the new culture, your uncertainty and stress may take time to subside as you learn the values and message systems that characterize the culture. If you are trying to communicate with someone from a background quite different from yours—even on your home turf—it is important to consider the role of culture as you interact.

Our culture and life experiences determine our **worldview**—the general perception shared by a culture or group of people about key beliefs and issues, such as death, God, and the meaning of life, that influences interaction with others. A culture's worldview, according to intercultural communication scholar Carley Dodd, encompasses "how the culture perceives the role of various forces in explaining why events occur as they do in a social setting."²³ These beliefs shape our thoughts, language, and actions. Your worldview permeates all aspects of how you interact with society; it's like a lens through which you observe the world. If, as we noted in Chapter 1.1, communication is how we make sense out of the world and share that sense with others, our worldview is one of the primary filters that influence how we make sense out of the world. Two frameworks for describing how culture influences our worldview include cultural context and cultural values.

Cultural Contexts



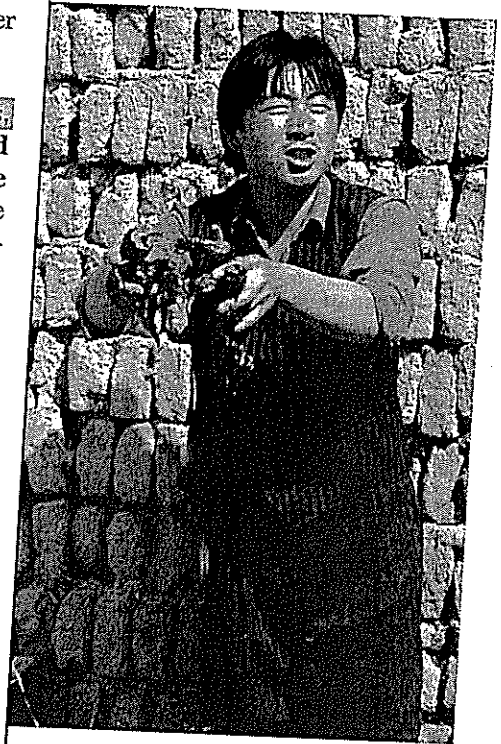
The **cultural context** of any communication consists of the nonverbal and environmental cues that surround and give additional information about a message. In this sense, *all* nonverbal cues are part of a cultural context. Some cultures give more weight to the surrounding nonverbal context than to the explicit verbal message when interpreting the overall meaning of a message. Other cultures place less emphasis on the nonverbal context and greater emphasis on what someone says.

For example, when you interview for a job, you may be scanning the face of your interviewer and looking for nonverbal messages to provide cues about the impression you are making on the interviewer. These contextual cues (in this case, the nonverbal messages) give meaning to help you interpret the message of your interviewer. Edward T. Hall helped us understand the importance

of cultural context when he categorized cultures as either high- or low-context.²⁴

High-Context Cultures In **high-context cultures**, people derive much information from nonverbal and environmental cues and less information from the words of a message. Communicators rely heavily on the context of more subtle information such as facial expression, vocal cues, and even silence in interpreting messages, hence the term *high-context cultures* to indicate the emphasis placed on the context. Asian, Arab, and Southern European peoples are more likely to draw on the context for message interpretation.

Low-Context Cultures People in **low-context cultures** derive much information from the words of a message and less information from nonverbal and environmental cues. Individuals from low-context cultures, such as North Americans, Germans, and Scandinavians, may perceive people from high-context cultures as less attractive, knowledgeable, and trustworthy, because they violate unspoken low-context cultural rules of conduct and communication. Individuals from low-context cultures often are less skilled in interpreting unspoken contextual messages.²⁵ Figure 1.6.2 describes differences in communication style between high-context and low-context cultures.



Members of high-context cultures are skilled in using nonverbal cues to communicate. Members of low-context cultures rely more on actual words to send and receive messages.

Cultural Values

Ancient Egyptians worshiped cats. The Druids of England believed they could tap into spiritual powers in the shadow of the mysterious rock circle of Stonehenge at the summer solstice. Some would say contemporary Americans place a high value on accumulating material possessions and making pilgrimages to sports arenas on weekends. By paying attention to what a culture values, we can learn important clues about how to respond to communication messages, establish relationships, and avoid making embarrassing errors when interacting with people from a given culture. Identifying **what a given group of people values or appreciates (cultural values)** can give us insight into the behavior of an individual raised within that culture. Although there are considerable differences among the world's cultural values—clearly, not all cultures value the same things—Geert Hofstede has identified five categories for measuring values that are important in almost every culture.²⁶ Even though his original data were collected more than 30 years ago and only sampled employees (predominantly males) who worked at IBM—a large international company with branch offices in many countries—his original research remains

TABLE 1.6.1

Cultural Value	Countries That Scored Higher on This Cultural Value	Countries That Scored Lower on This Cultural Value
Individualism: Societies with higher individualism scores generally value individual accomplishment rather than collective or collaborative achievement.	United States, Australia, Great Britain, Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand, Italy, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, France	Guatemala, Ecuador, Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Costa Rica, Peru, Taiwan, South Korea
Power Distribution: Societies with higher power distribution scores generally value greater power differences between people; they are generally more accepting of fewer people having authority and power than are those with lower scores on this cultural dimension.	Malaysia, Guatemala, Panama, Philippines, Mexico, Venezuela, Arab countries, Ecuador, Indonesia, India	Australia, Israel, Denmark, New Zealand, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Switzerland, Great Britain, United States
Uncertainty Avoidance: Societies with higher uncertainty avoidance scores generally prefer to avoid uncertainty; they like to know what will happen next. Societies with lower scores are more comfortable with uncertainty.	Greece, Portugal, Guatemala, Uruguay, Belgium, Japan, Peru, France	Singapore, Jamaica, Denmark, Sweden, Hong Kong, Ireland, Great Britain, Malaysia, India, Philippines, United States
Masculinity: Societies with higher masculinity scores value high achievement, men in more assertive roles, and more clearly differentiated sex roles than do societies with lower scores on this cultural dimension.	Japan, Australia, Venezuela, Italy, Switzerland, Mexico, Ireland, Jamaica, Great Britain, United States	Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Denmark, Costa Rica, Finland, Chile, Portugal, Thailand
Orientation to Time: Societies with higher scores have a longer-term orientation to time; they tend to value perseverance and thrift. Societies with lower scores have a shorter-term orientation to time; they value the past and present, respect for tradition, saving "face," and spending rather than saving money.	China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Vietnam, South Korea, Brazil, India, Thailand, Hungary, Singapore, Denmark, Netherlands	Pakistan, Czech Republic, Nigeria, Spain, Philippines, Canada, Zimbabwe, Great Britain, United States, Portugal, New Zealand

Source: Adapted with permission from Geert Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede, *Cultures and Organization: Software of the Mind*, Revised and Expanded 2nd Edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005). © Geert Hofstede BV.

tests; its community awards to firefighters for dedicated service, to winners of spelling bees, to chefs for their barbecue recipes—perhaps epitomizes the individualistic culture.

Some researchers believe that the values of individualism and collectivism are the most important values of any culture—they determine the essential nature of every other facet of how people behave.²⁷ Other researchers, how-

ever, caution that cultures are complex and that it is dangerous to label an entire culture as "individualistic" or "collectivistic."²⁸ We agree—obviously, not everyone in a given culture fits a single label. But in trying to understand the role of culture and its impact on human communication, we believe that Hofstede's concept of cultural values, with special emphasis on individualism and collectivism, helps explain and predict how people may send and interpret communication.²⁹ Using Hofstede's five cultural values to describe a given culture or geographic region is a bit like flying over a country at 35,000 feet; at that height you can't see the details and note nuances of difference, but you can gain a broad overview of the cultural landscape.

Traditionally, North Americans place a high value on individual achievements. People from Asian cultures are more likely to value collective or group achievement. Hofstede summed up the American value system this way:

Chief among the virtues claimed ... is self-realization. Each person is viewed as having a unique set of talents and potentials. The translation of these potentials into actuality is considered the highest purpose to which one can devote one's life.³⁰

In a collectivistic culture, conversely, people strive to accomplish goals for the benefit of the group rather than the individual. Here's a description of the Kenyan culture's emphasis on group or team collaboration:

... nobody is an isolated individual. Rather, his [or her] uniqueness is a secondary fact. . . . In this new system, group activities are dominant, responsibility is shared and accountability is collective. . . . Because of the emphasis on collectivity, harmony and cooperation among the group tend to be emphasized more than individual function and responsibility.³¹

Individualistic cultures tend to be more loosely knit socially; individuals feel responsibility for taking care of themselves and their immediate families.³² Individuals in collectivistic cultures expect more loyalty and support from others and demonstrate more loyalty to the community. Because collectivistic cultures place more value on "we" than on "I," teamwork approaches usually succeed better in their workplaces. U.S. businesses have tried to adopt some of Japan's successful team strategies for achieving high productivity. However, while teamwork training has been successful, U.S. workers still need constantly to be reminded to collaborate and work collectively.

Decentralized and Centralized Approaches to Power and Cultural Values Some cultures are more comfortable with a broad distribution of power. People from such cultures prefer a decentralized approach to power. Leadership is not vested in just one person. Decisions in a culture that values decentralized power distribution are more likely to be made by consensus rather than by decree. Research suggests that people from Australia, Israel, Denmark, New Zealand, and Ireland typically prefer minimized power differences between others; they strive for more equal distribution of authority and control.³³

Cultures that place a high value on centralized power are more comfortable with a more structured form of government, as well as managerial styles that feature clear lines of authority. Hierarchical bureaucracies are common, and the general assumption is that some people will have more power, control, and influence than others. Research by Hofstede suggests that people from Malaysia, Guatemala, Panama, and the Philippines are all high on the centralized power scale.³⁴

Uncertainty and Certainty and Cultural Values “Why don’t they tell me what’s going on?” exclaims an exasperated student. “I don’t know what my grades are. I don’t know what my SAT score is. I’m in a complete fog.” Many people like to know “what’s going on.” They like to avoid uncertainty and to have a general sense of what’s going to happen. Too much uncertainty makes them uncomfortable.

Some people tolerate more ambiguity and uncertainty than others. Cultures in which people need certainty to feel secure are more likely to develop and enforce rigid rules for behavior and establish more elaborate codes of conduct. People from cultures with a greater tolerance for uncertainty have more relaxed, informal expectations for others. “It will sort itself out” and “Go with the flow” are phrases that characterize their attitudes.³⁵ As shown in Table 1.6.1, people from Greece, Portugal, and Guatemala generally do not like uncertainty, while people from Singapore, Jamaica, and Denmark are more comfortable not knowing what will happen next.

Again, we remind you that although there is evidence for the existence of the general cultural value of uncertainty avoidance, not all people in a given culture or country find this cultural value equally important. There is considerable variation within a culture as to how people respond to uncertainty.

Masculine and Feminine Cultural Values Some cultures emphasize traditional male values—such as getting things done and being more assertive; other cultures place greater emphasis on traditional female values—building relationships and seeking peace and harmony with others. **People from masculine cultures tend to value more traditional roles for men and women, as well as achievement, assertiveness, heroism, and material wealth.** These values are not only about biological differences; they are general approaches to interacting with other people. **Men and women from feminine cultures tend to value such things as caring for the less fortunate, being sensitive toward others, and enhancing the overall quality of life.**³⁶ Later in this chapter, we will discuss how gender contributes to the



Members of a collectivistic culture may find team sports to be more satisfying than individual sports.

On the Web

You need not travel to a foreign destination to experience another culture; opportunities to experience cultural differences may be as close as talking with your roommate, an instructor, or a good friend. To learn more about the role of culture in communication, check out one of the following Web sites, which offer more information about intercultural communication.

www.awesomelibrary.org is the Web address of Awesome Library. Once you're at this site, type in the words "intercultural communication" in the Search box to access information and resources about intercultural communication skills and principles.

www.takingitglobal.org/home.html is the site for Taking It Global. It provides resources that focus on student travel, including cultural tips and ideas to facilitate better understanding between people from different cultures.

development of a culture, but for now it is enough to realize that whole cultures can be typified by whether they identify with or emphasize masculine or feminine values.

Having said all of the above, we caution you to avoid making sweeping generalizations about every person in any cultural group. Just as there are differences between and among cultures, there are differences within a cultural group. For centuries, most countries have had masculine cultures. Men and their conquests are featured in history books and all aspects of society more than women. But today's cultural anthropologists see some shift in these values. There is some movement toward the middle, with greater equality between masculine and feminine roles.

Long-Term and Short-Term Time Orientation and Cultural Values

A culture's orientation to time falls on a continuum between long-term and short-term.³⁷ People from a culture with a long-term

orientation to time place an emphasis on the future and tend to value perseverance and thrift because these are virtues that pay off over a long period of time. A long-term time orientation also implies a greater willingness to subordinate oneself for a larger purpose, such as the good of society or the group. In contrast, a culture that tends to have a short-term time orientation values spending rather than saving (because of a focus on the immediate rather than the future), tradition (because of the value placed on the past), and preserving "face" of both self and others (making sure that an individual

is respected and that his or her dignity is upheld) and has an expectation that results will soon follow the actions and effort expended on a task. Short-term cultures also place a high value on social and status obligations.

As shown in Table 1.6.1, cultures or societies with a long-term time orientation include many Asian cultures such as China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan. Short-term time orientation cultures include Pakistan, Czech Republic, Nigeria, Spain, and the Philippines. Both Canada and the United States are closer to the short-term time orientation than the long-term time orientation, which suggests an emphasis on valuing quick results from projects and greater pressure toward spending rather than saving, as well as a respect for traditions.³⁸





Cultural Values

- | | |
|--|---|
| Individualistic vs. Collectivistic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualistic cultures value individual accomplishments and achievement. • Collectivistic cultures value group and team collaboration. |
| Decentralized vs. Centralized Power | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralized power cultures value having power in the hands of a smaller number of people. • Decentralized power cultures favor more equality and a more even distribution of power in government and organizations. |
| Uncertainty vs. Certainty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultures that value certainty do not like ambiguity and value feeling secure. • Cultures with a greater tolerance for uncertainty are comfortable with ambiguity and less information. |
| Masculine vs. Feminine | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masculine cultures value achievement, assertiveness, heroism, material wealth, and more traditional sex roles. • Feminine cultures value relationships, caring for the less fortunate, overall quality of life, and less traditional distinctions between sex roles. |
| Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation to Time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultures with a long-term orientation to time tend to be future-oriented and value perseverance and thrift. • Cultures with a short-term orientation to time tend to value the past and present, respecting tradition, preserving "face," and fulfilling social obligations. |



Gender and Communication

Perhaps the most obvious form of human diversity is gender—the division of human beings into female and male. As we pointed out in Chapter 1.2, a person's sex is determined by biology; gender is the culturally constructed and psychologically based perception of one's self as feminine, masculine, or **androgynous** (having both feminine and masculine traits). One's