OVER FIFTY WAYS CULTURE INFLUENCES US

ETIQUETTE AND BEHAVIOR
  • How we greet each other.
  • What is considered common courtesy.
  • What is considered impolite.
  • How we show respect and disrespect.
  • What is embarrassing.
  • What makes us feel good.
  • What we eat and how we eat.
  • What we wear.
  • What we buy and how we behave in stores.
  • How often we touch each other and how we touch each other.
  • How closely we stand next to each other.
  • The holidays we celebrate and the way we celebrate.
  • How we use money, credit, and bartering.
  • What is risqué.
  • How we seek and use health services.
  • What we find humorous.
  • How we use mass transit.
  • Seating placement in a room.

BELIEFS AND VALUES
  • What is beautiful or ugly.
  • What are worthwhile goals in life.
  • The nature of God and other religious beliefs.
  • Whether a person is in control of his or her own life or whether fate determines one’s life.
  • Common sense.
  • Our perceived needs.
  • Whether privacy is desirable or undesirable.
  • Appropriate health care.
  • Appropriate personal hygiene.
  • What is “right”; what is “wrong”.
  • The role of trust.

TIME
  • How time is scheduled and used.
  • Whether schedules are important or unimportant.
  • The importance of maintaining tradition.
  • The importance of preparing for the future.
  • Whether old age is valuable or undesirable.
  • The importance of understanding one’s history and passing it on.

COMMUNICATION
  • The language we speak.
  • What should be said; what should be left unsaid.
  • What is appropriate “small talk”.
  • Whom we speak to; to whom we should not speak.
  • Whether conversation should be formal or informal.
  • The meaning of hand gestures, facial expressions, and other nonverbal communication.
  • How often we smile, whom we smile at, and the meaning of a smile.
  • In which environments it is “safe” to speak one’s mind; in which environments we must censor identity.
  • Our tone of voice, use of emotion, use of stories.

HUMAN RELATIONS
  • The role of the individual.
  • The role and structure of the family.
  • The roles of men and how men should behave.
  • The roles of women and how women behave.
  • The importance of individual competition.
  • Social class system.
  • Hierarchy in business relationships.
  • Interactions between strangers.
  • How to interact with a person in authority (e.g., boss, police officer, teacher).
  • How to interact with a person who is serving us.
  • Relationships and obligations between parents and children and other family members.
  • Crowd or audience behavior.