

# Navigating U.S. Culture In and Out of the Classroom



International Student and Scholar Services and Outreach

International Student Orientation – Fall 2017

# Activity



1. Form a groups with five members
2. Each group should have one banana
- 3. DO NOT PEEL THE BANANA**
4. You have five minutes to create clear instructions on how to peel a banana.

**DO NOT PEEL OR EAT THE BANANA**



# Volunteers?



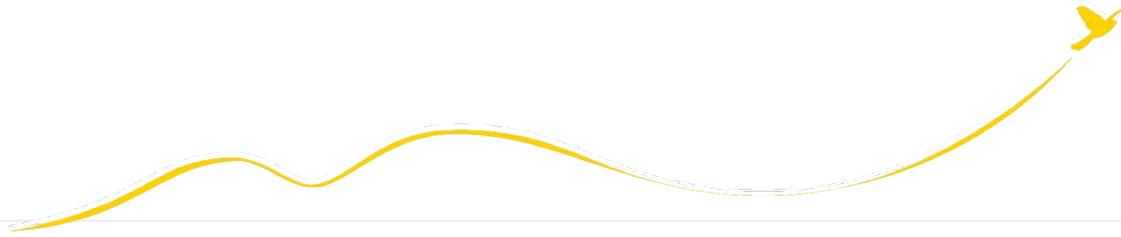
# Different Instructions?



Were any of the  
instructions **wrong?**



What are the advantages and disadvantages of each **different** way of peeling a banana?



How did you learn to  
peel a banana?



Are there other things  
you do without thinking  
about how you do  
them? What? Why?



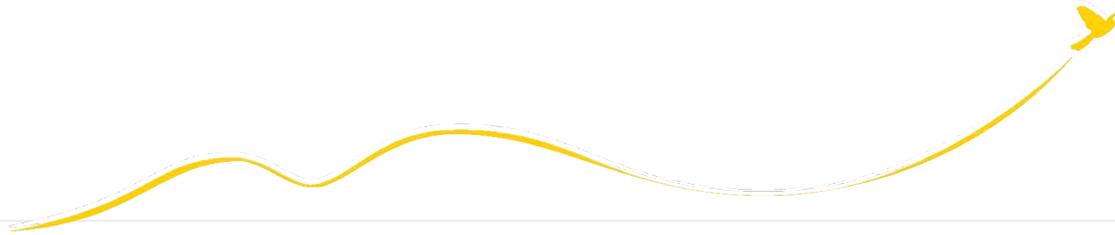
What does this teach us  
about what we can  
learn from others?

# Five Key Findings



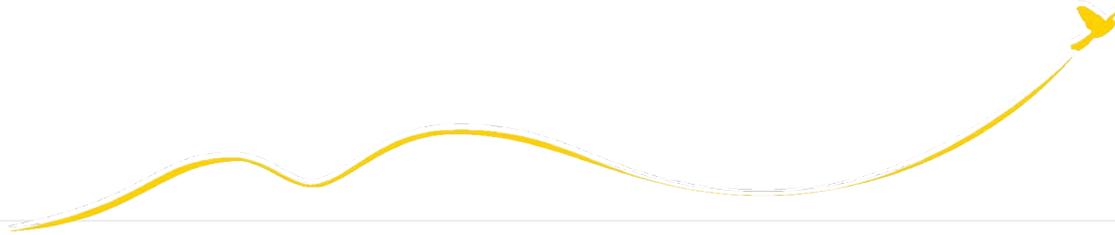
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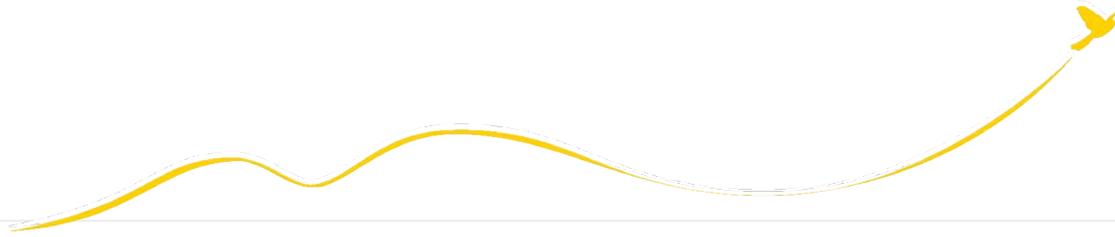
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# Five Key Findings



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2. There are different ways to reach the same outcome!
3. Things can be learned from diverse perspectives
4. Individual differences exist, cultural generalizations can be made.

# Five Key Findings

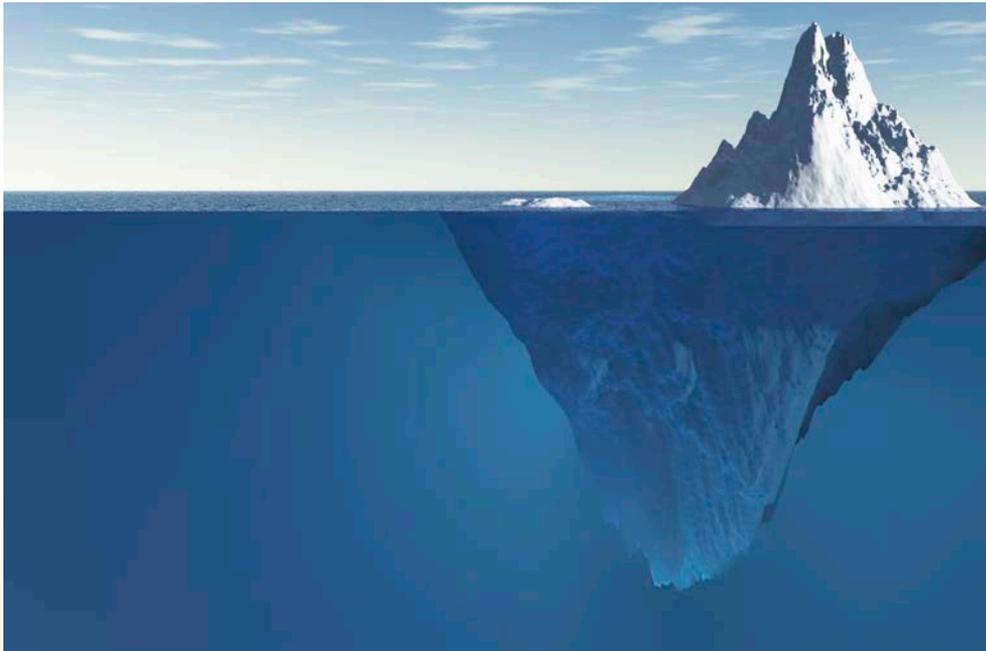


1. We have automatic ways of doing things that we don't question and assume to be right.
2. There are different ways to reach the same outcome!
3. Things can be learned from diverse perspectives
4. Individual differences exist, cultural generalizations can be made.
5. Seeing contrasting ideas and thoughts helps us recognize our assumptions.



# What is Culture?

# Iceberg Model?



## Observable

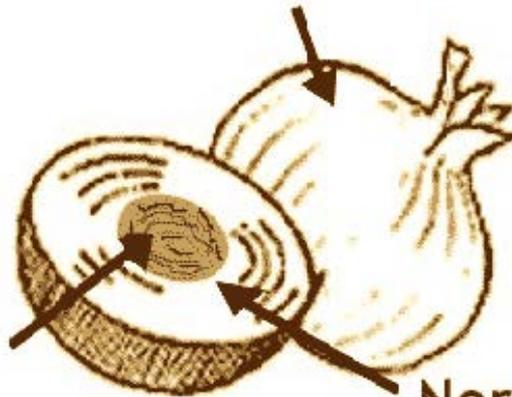
- Behaviors
- Appearance
- Habits
- Language
- Customs

## Non-Observable

- Learning styles
- Concept of time
- Thought process
- Norms
- Values

# Onion Model

## Visual Cultural Differences



Language

Housing

Food

Clothes

## Norms and Values

greetings

bow, shake hands

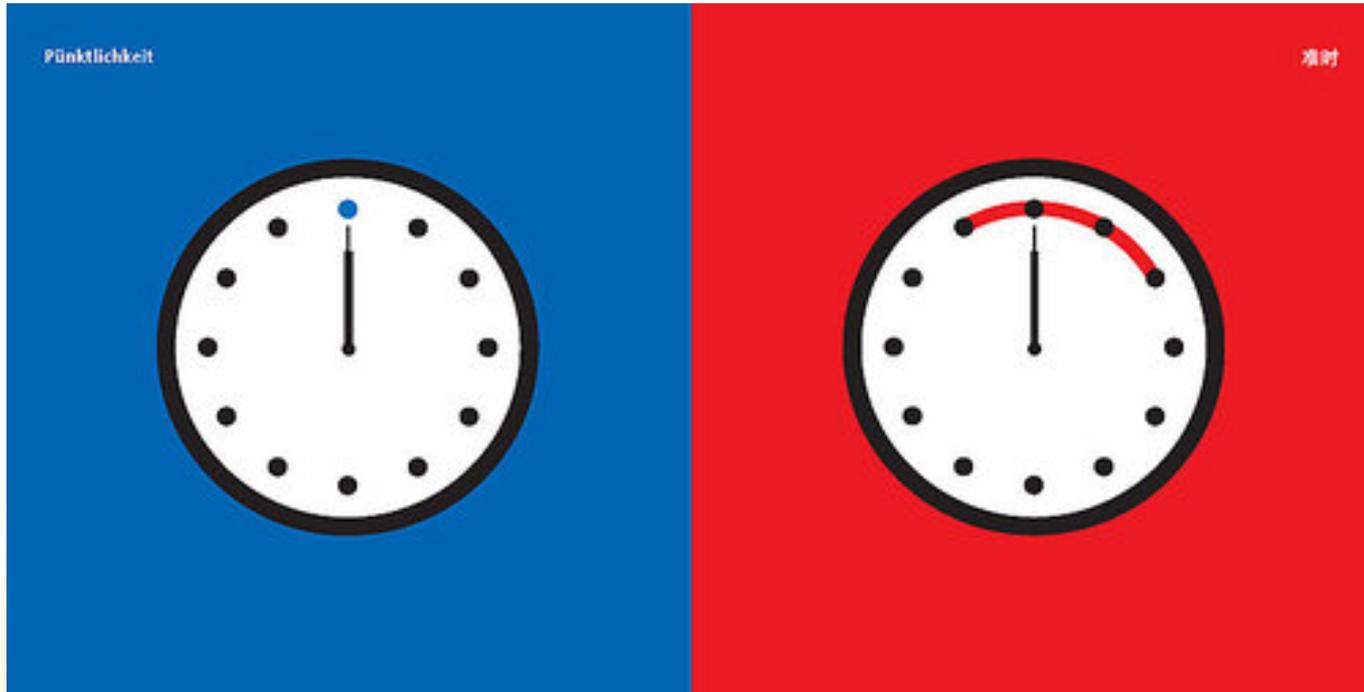
## Key Beliefs

Not so visible but has an effect on determining behaviour at a more superficial level

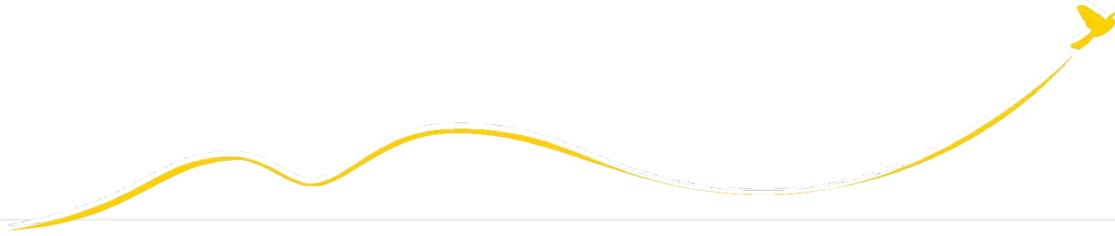


# U.S. Culture

# Cultural Differences - Time



# Cultural Differences - Time



## Monochronic/U.S.

- Time is a commodity – “don’t waste time,” “time is money”
- Be **prompt**, don’t be late
- Start on time and end on time
- Time is scheduled and organized **for one thing at a time**
- Time divided into blocks using a **calendar** or **clock**
- Appointments and **scheduled** events are taken seriously
- Cultural emphasis on **efficiency**

## Polychronic

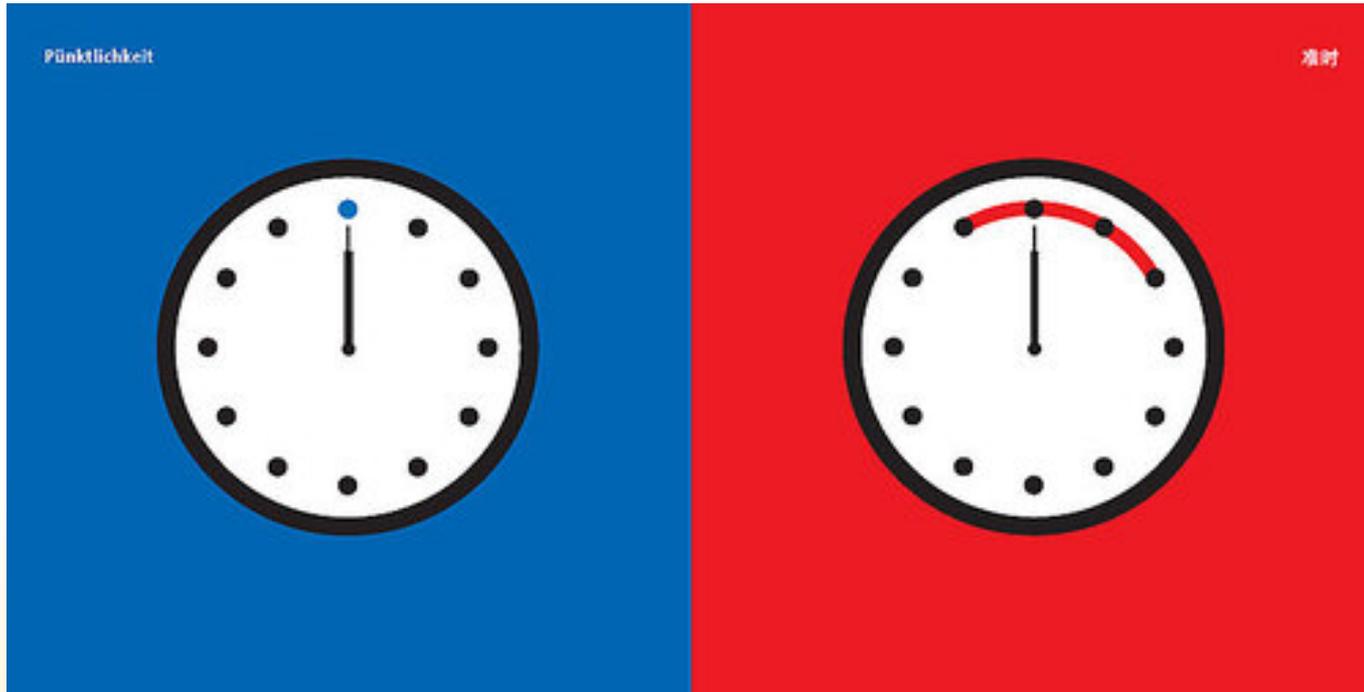
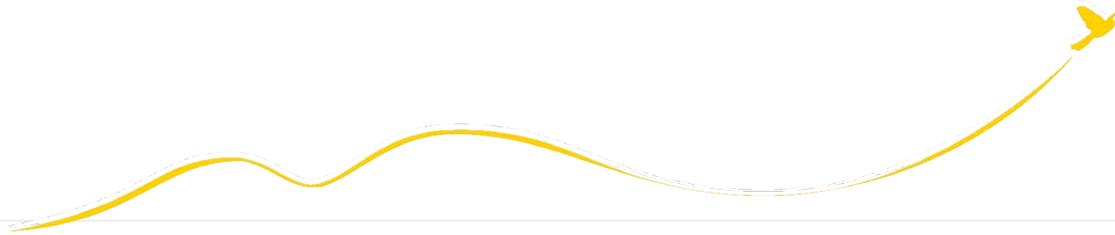
- Time is **flexible, fluid**
- Time varies with the season or because of religious festivals.
- Easier to **change** or **adapt** when plans change
- Go **until it is finished**, not until the time finished
- Time commitments based on value of **relationship**
- Many Polychronic cultures value relationships and an unexpected visit will change the schedule.

# Deadlines!

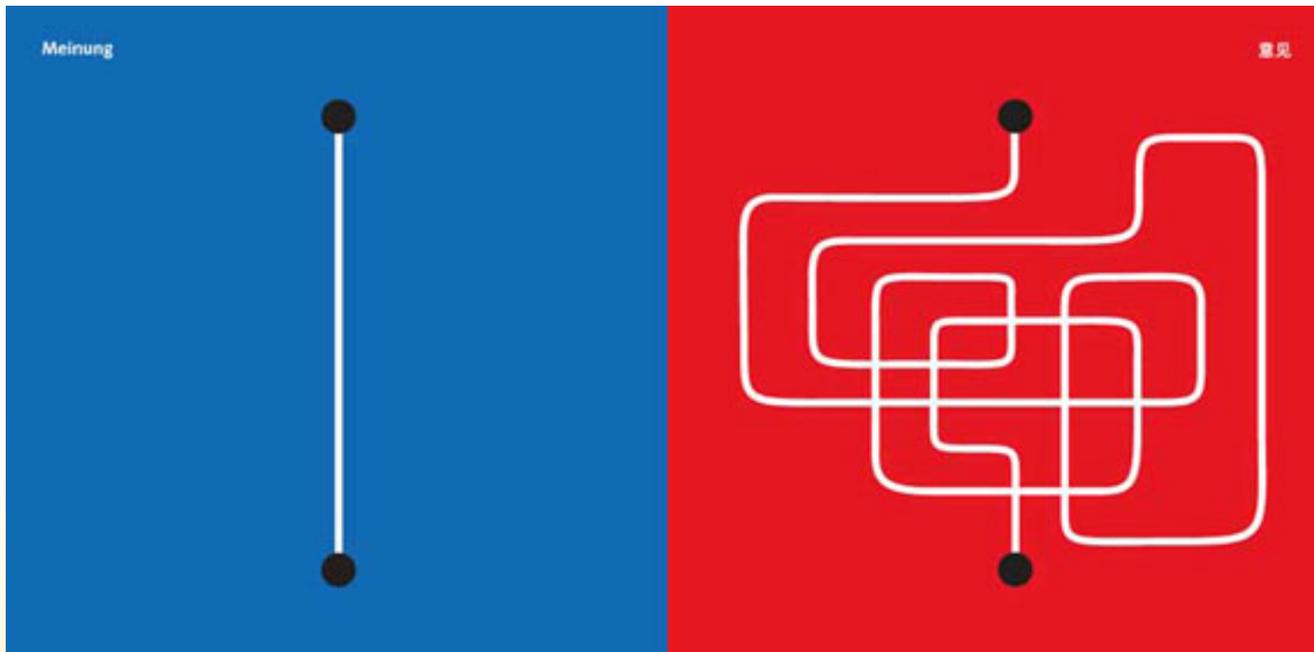
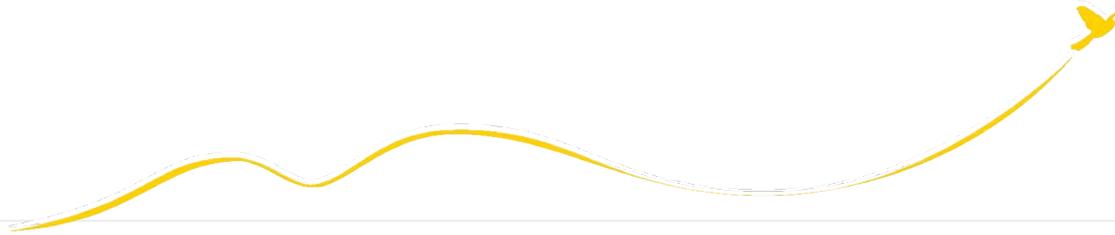


**In a monochronic culture (i.e. the U.S.), not completing a project or task can be a very serious offense.**

# Cultural Differences - Time



# Cultural Differences - Communication



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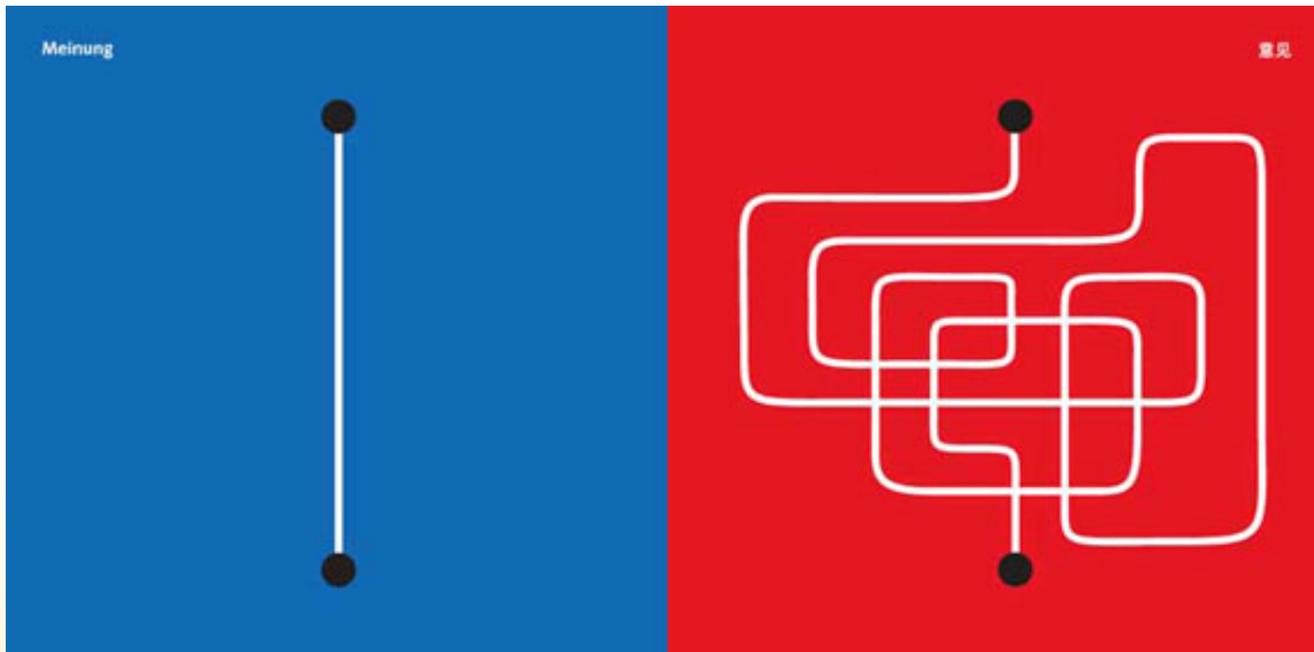
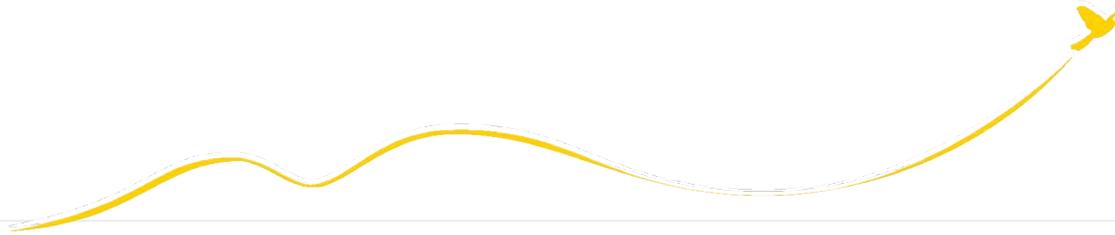
## Direct /U.S. Culture

- Emphasis on words
- Instructions are **explicit**, less room for interpretation
- Get to the point quickly!
- Focus of communication is on the **task**, not the relationship.
- More **formal, written** communication
- Most **policies are written and made public**
- Business conducted by **email and phone**
- When making a point or argument moves from **point to point** building upon each point before arriving at request or recommendation
- Criticism is given **privately**

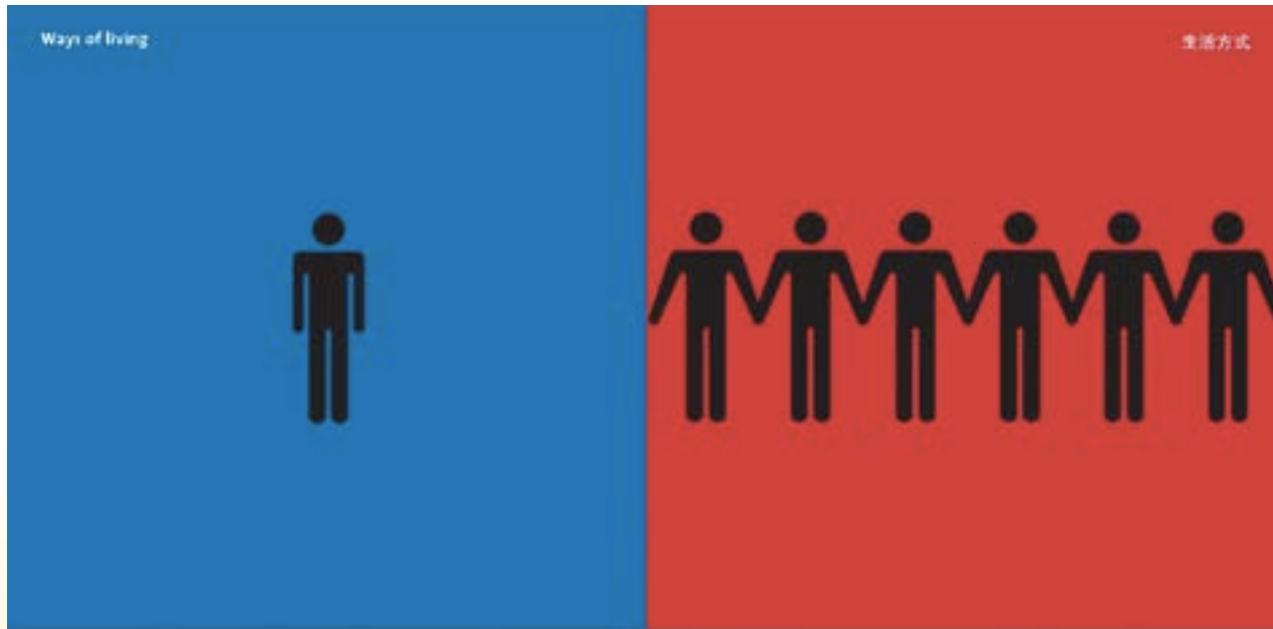
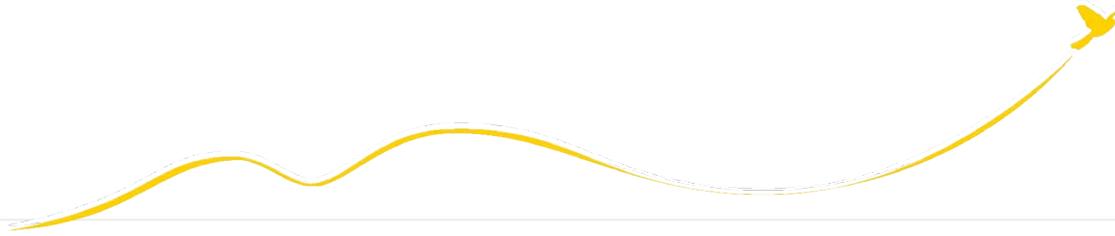
## Indirect

- It's **how** you say it, **not what** you say!
- Emphasis on **tone of voice, body language, silence** etc..
- **Details** and **relationships** between communicators more important
- Relationships are built and nurtured before doing business.
- Business conducted **in person**
- Often times the key point or request is **unspoken** and not written but expected to be understood
- Often uses story telling to make key point
- Criticism delivered through third party or simply be **implicit**

# Cultural Differences - Communication



# Cultural Differences – Relationships



# Cultural Differences – The Individual



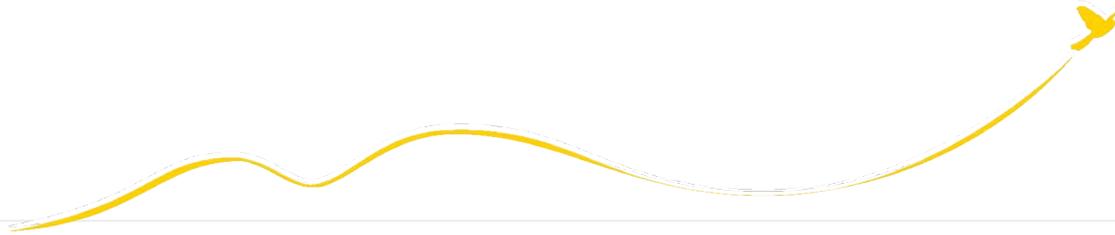
## Individualism/U.S.

- People are viewed as **individuals** before they are viewed as group members
- Parents and teachers want to help people become **independent**
- Speak about “I”
- Emphasis on truth telling.
- People have their **own needs** and need to be **alone**
- Success of the **individual** is the most important

## Collectivism

- Sum of the parts is more valuable than any one individual
- Parents and teachers want to help young people feel **safe** and that they will never have to be alone
- The needs of the **larger group/family** are more important than an individuals needs
- Success of the **group/family** is most important
- Goal of parenting and mentoring is **develop loyalty** to the **family** or social **group**

# Collectivism and Individualism Working Together

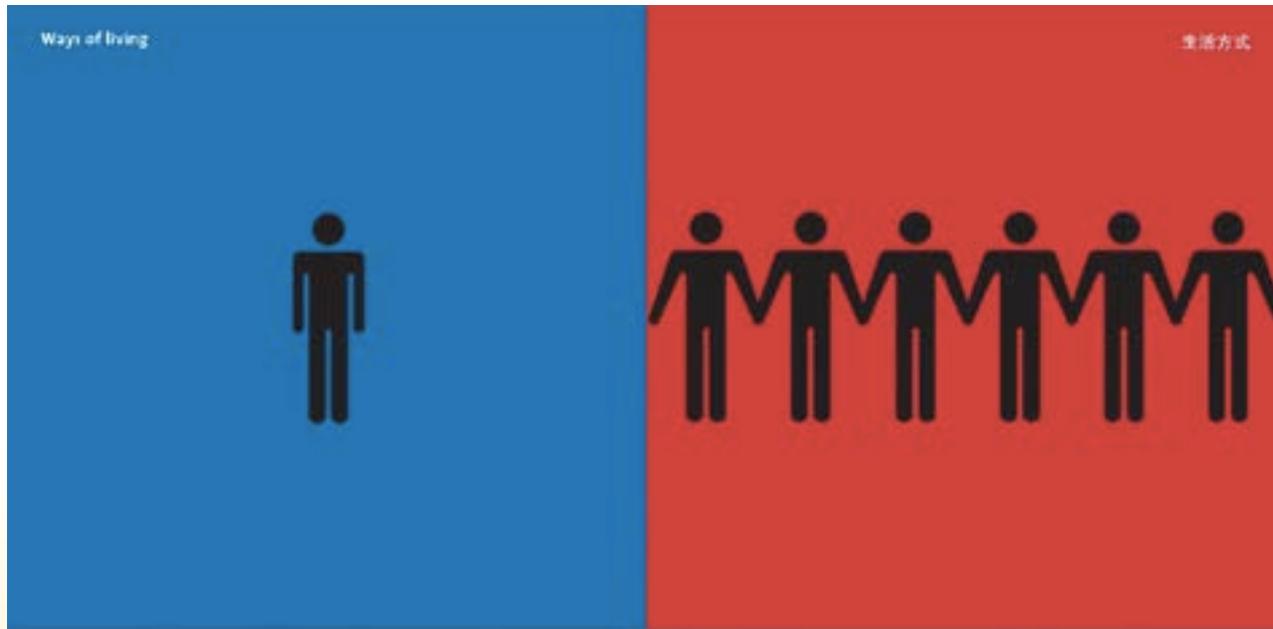


People from collectivist cultures might need to limit the expectations they have of receiving help from others and do more for themselves

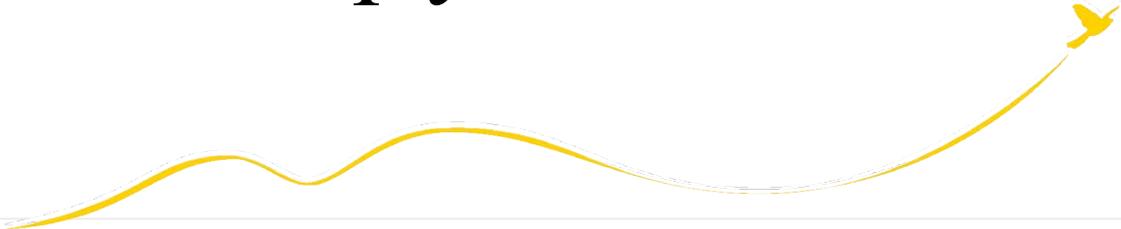
People from collectivists cultures may enjoy the new freedom of having fewer obligations.

- *Dr. Katherine Punteney (2015)*

# Cultural Differences – The Individual

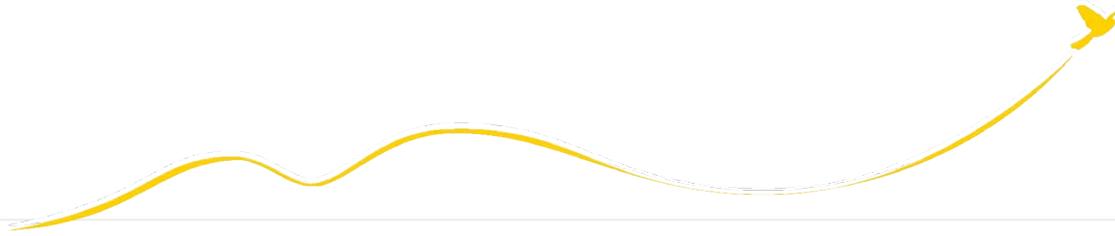


# Develop your Intercultural Competence



*a set of cognitive, affective and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of contexts. – Jannet M. Bennett, Ph.D.*

# O.S.E.E. – a Useful Framework



O – observe (and listen to) what is happening

S – state objectively what is happening

E – explore different explanations for what is happening

E – evaluate which explanation (s) is the most likely one (s)

*(Deardorff & Deardorff, 2000; Deardorff, 2008)*

# Apply the Framework



Split into groups of 8

Watch the situation unfold.

Brainstorm with your group and fill out the form using the O.S.E.E. framework.



# Questions?