



J.NYDEN and **COMPANY**
Negotiating Big Gains for Businesses

“Why Don't They Get It?!” Multiculturalism and Conflict in the Workplace

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What do you think?

- In the next 60 seconds in the space in your handout, list ***EVERY*** culture that you can think of.

For example:

1. Sales people
2. Tweens
3. Midwesterners

What we want . . .



What we get . . .



What is culture and how might
it impact the workplace?

Professor LeBaron's Definition of Culture

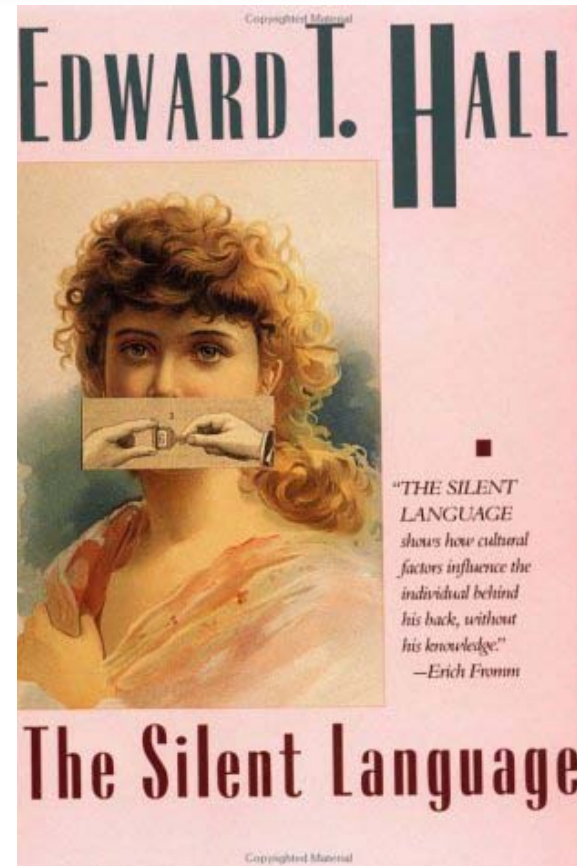
1. A defined group with shared values, beliefs and behavioral expectations,
2. that are learned by being passed on from older members of the group to newer members of the group.



Sociologist's Definition of Culture

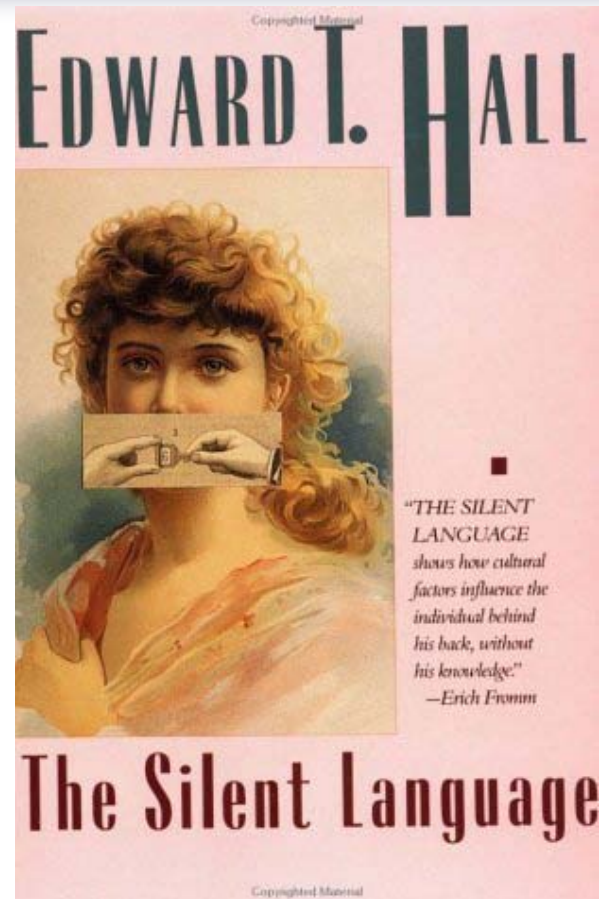
- “Culture is not some exotic notion. It is the mold in which we are all cast and it controls our daily lives in many unsuspected ways.”

Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language*.
Anchor Books (Random House),
New York, 1951 (reprint 1990).



Two Important Thoughts

- Culture hides itself from ourselves. It is hard for us to recognize our own cultural beliefs.
- Our job is to understand our own culture, before we try to understand another culture.



Warning!



Cultural Attribution Error

The tendency to overlook other factors in favor of cultural explanations.

Cultural Attribution Errors

- People are individuals first and foremost.
- All countries have cultural variances including the U.S.
- Conflict arises from a variety of circumstances:
 - communication
 - personality
 - stated/unstated expectations

Communication

- Does your company consciously communicate its expectations or does it think employees “should get it”?



Expectations

- What is considered “good” in one culture could be “bad” in another.
- We expect employees to use “common sense”, to do it the “right” way, and to fit in.
- When the employee doesn’t fit the norm, we have very special words to describe them.



Blame and Shame

- Uncouth
- Unsophisticated
- Inept
- Rude
- Unintelligent
- “Oh, brother...”
- “He doesn’t get it!”
- Uncultured
- Ill-bred
- Discourteous
- Uncivil
- Undiplomatic
- Clumsy
- Coarse
- “Why bother?”
- “So inconsiderate!”

Worth Remembering

*“In conflict we react
because we care.”*

Professor LeBaron



Knowledge Provides Clues

- As we become aware of all aspects of our culture, we begin to realize that people see things from a very different perspective.
- Once you accept this fact, you will be less likely to make negative judgments about others, and more likely to make progress when conflict arises.

Cultural Generalizations

- Most of the ways scholars study culture and communication are derived largely from Western concepts.



Generalizations

- Individualistic
- Task
- Written agreement
- Direct communication
- Forgiveness
- Communal
- Process
- Symbolic gestures
- Nonverbal communication
- Restitution

Cultural Expectations

Individuals will attempt to stay true to their primary culture, but that primary culture may be different than the chosen culture at the workplace or different from their co-workers' culture.

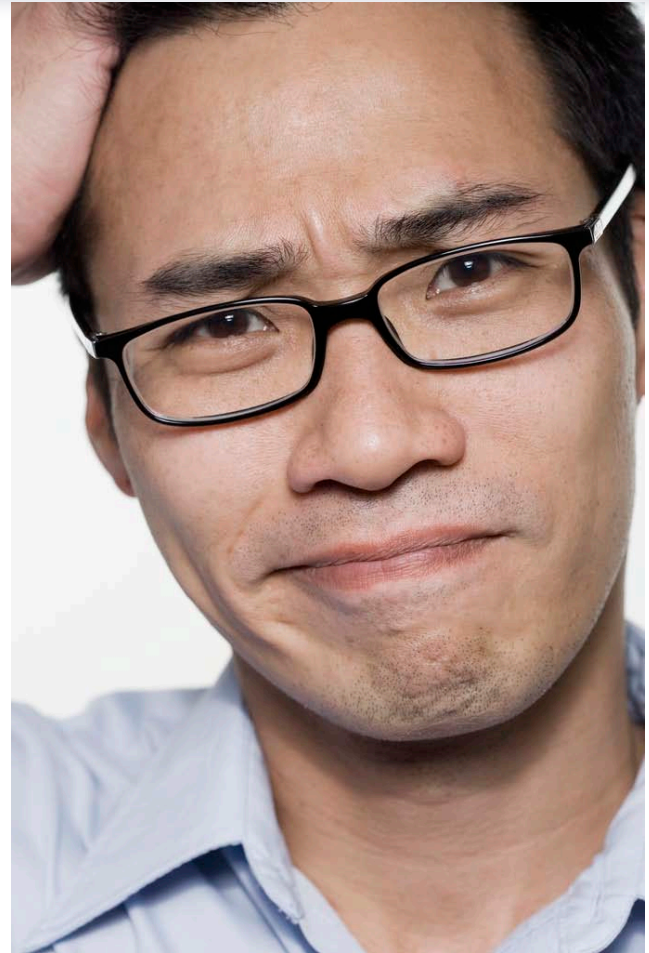


Correctly Assess the Situation!



Time to Think

1. What is your company's corporate culture?
2. What (or where) are the cultural breakdowns?



Empathy

- Distinctly human characteristic
- Needed to build relationships
- Need relationships to have collaboration



A World of Approaches



Alignment

- Individual's values and self identity
- Corporate Values
- Team Values
- The Law



Your Approach Should . . .

- Validate the individual's identity.
- Express empathy.
- Coach people to see the other side.
- Acknowledge differences.
- Articulate behavioral expectations.

Time to Think

1. Describe your corporate conflict resolution culture?
2. What can you do to better manage “cultural clashes”?

- For example:
- It is seen as a failure to call HR for help.
- I “should” be able to manage my own people.

Final Thoughts

1. Be willing to try different approaches to meet the individual's needs. One size does not fit all.
2. Learn more about how other cultures approach conflict and other cultural norms around conflict. (**Hint:** start by looking at foreign companies in your industry.)



Final Thoughts

3. Recognize your own cultural biases and own them. Awareness will prevent you from blaming and shaming others.
4. Continually ask yourself ... *“Am I missing something?”*



We all want to fit in!

