Cross-Cultural Encounters: List of Conclusions

1. The outsider must realize that what seems irrational, contradictory, or unimportant to him/her, may seem rational, consistent and terribly important to the person in the other culture, company, department or occupation.

2. Judgments about other cultures, companies, or departments by others must be regarded with a healthy dose of skepticism. In other words, one should make up one's own mind about another culture and not rely on the reports and experiences of others.

3. It's often dangerous to try to play by the other culture's rules if you don't have a basic understanding of the culture.

4. Learning the language of the other culture is one of the most important things one can do to understand and work with it.

5. One is likely to seriously misinterpret other cultures if one evaluates them solely in terms of one's own values, expectations and behavior.

6. People are rarely aware of the impact their language has on an outsider.

7. Visitors are often "invisible" to people within the culture.

8. It requires study as well as experience to understand the many subtleties of another culture.

9. Different cultures, companies or departments often interpret the same event differently.

10. There is often a reluctance to interpret one's own culture to outsiders until they've "earned" the right to know.

11. Developing a close friendship with a sensitive person from the other culture who can serve as one's guide and advocate is one of the best strategies for understanding and working with the other culture.

12. The feelings people have for one's own language are often not evident until the encounter another language.

13. Large corporations would enhance communication among department and divisions by encouraging a common vocabulary.

14. Stereotyping is probably inevitable in the absence of frequent contact or study.

15. People tend to put negative interpretations on differences in which the same task is done differently in the two cultures.

16. Apprehension, loneliness, lack of confidence are common when visiting another culture.

17. Differences between cultures are generally seen as threatening and described in negative terms.

18. People often feel that their own language is superior and that people who speak their language are smarter.

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