



# IN TOUCH

## *Cross Cultural Cohesiveness*

Learning how to communicate effectively across cultures is becoming crucial to success in business. The coworker in the next cubicle may see the world differently from the way you do. How do you increase your understanding of others' views (and vice versa) and avoid cross-cultural misunderstandings that can inhibit efficiency and productivity?

***Understand the mechanics:*** All of us have "filters"—values, life experiences, traditions, and beliefs that play key roles in how we interpret experiences and events and that influence our perceptions. How people perceive matters can differ greatly among other cultures.

***Look out for cross-cultural differences:*** Although it is helpful to understand another person's perspective and world view, you may not have the luxury of discovering it or having it explained prior to a misunderstanding. Knowing that cultural views may differ can instill more patience, a healthy sense of curiosity, and a willingness to learn from a coworker rather than invest in conflict.

***People are the same, it's the rules that differ:*** We want to understand and be understood. Rules differ among cultures about how to talk to and act toward others—whether to look someone in the eye while

speaking, express feelings openly, or show emotions to those we don't know. Be slow to be offended by differences and quick to consider whether a cultural rule is in play. People from different cultures work better together when they share rules of communication, but it may take time before new rules are adopted.

## *Road Rage*

Four annoying habits that make drivers angry:

***Cutting someone off.*** Check both mirrors before changing lanes, use turn signals, and allow ample room to merge. Be aware of blind spots directly behind you on the left and right and avoid someone else's blind spots.

***Tailgating.*** To find out if you are tailgating, note when the car in front of you passes a landmark (a tree, sign, etc.), then count one thousand, two thousand. If you reach the same landmark before you say two thousand, you are following too closely.

***Driving too slowly.*** This may antagonize other motorists and disrupt the flow of traffic.

***Rude gestures and honking.*** This only adds to the stress of a situation and may provoke another driver. Do give waves of thanks for favors and a show of apology when you've made an error.



*Helping people lead healthier lives*

## *The Boomerang Generation*

Millions of parents have at least one adult child living at home, and the number of empty nesters welcoming an adult child home for a temporary stay is growing. These adult children have been called the “boomerang generation.” Divorce, unemployment, financial troubles, mental illness and chemical dependency, and other problems help explain this phenomenon. For most parents, the goal is helping the adult child gain independence as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, many parents worry about the meaning of “a temporary stay.”

If you have an adult child at home or one on the way, consider the following tips early on to keep your relationship healthy and help facilitate a transition back to independent living:

- 1) Discuss mutual expectations, house rules, chores, and shared financial responsibilities.
- 2) Consider a written agreement on these issues and the length of stay.
- 3) Avoid the trap of parental guilt that can fuel a lengthier stay, financial dependency, and the avoidance of responsibilities.
- 4) If relationship conflicts or substance abuse issues emerge, talk to your EAP. Don't wait.

Good communication, clear expectations, and a willingness to keep boundaries will help both you and your adult child look forward to a successful future.

## *Using Your EAP*

**Question:** I was referred to the EAP because of a legal problem off the job that came to the attention of my employer. Is this appropriate?

**Answer:** Remember, a supervisor referral to the EAP is designed to be helpful. A personal experience outside work that reflects upon the employer, your job, your qualifications or the job's essential functions may make the referral appropriate and possibly help you.

## *When You Quit Tobacco*

Within 20 minutes after you smoke that last cigarette, your body begins a series of changes that continue for years.

- 1) Twenty minutes after quitting, your heart rate drops. Twelve hours after quitting, the level of carbon monoxide in your blood drops to normal.
- 2) Two weeks to three months after quitting, your heart attack risk begins to drop. Your lung functioning begins to improve.
- 3) One to nine months after quitting, coughing and shortness of breath decrease.
- 4) One year after quitting, your added risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.
- 5) Five to 15 years after quitting, your stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker's.
- 6) Ten years after quitting, your lung cancer death rate is about half that of a smoker's. Your risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas decreases.
- 7) Fifteen years after quitting, your risk of coronary heart disease is back to that of a nonsmoker's.

For information and support on giving up tobacco, contact [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov) or 1.800.QUITNOW.

Source: Centers for Disease Control

## *Left-hand Turns*

One out of every three accidents happens at an intersection. The primary cause is failure to yield the right-of-way. Left-hand turns at intersections expose a vehicle and its passengers at the weakest point—the side doors. Many insurance companies encourage people to become educated about intersections and to avoid left-hand turns, if possible. Most accidents occur within 25 miles of home, so a frequently-used intersection necessitating a left-hand turn might be the one to avoid with an alternative route.

Source: Universal Underwriters Group

## Couples Counseling

Couples therapy doesn't save a marriage. Many experts say it's the couple in therapy that does the saving through hard work. Couples therapy is about acquiring healthier communication habits, letting go of old pain and unnecessary expectations, and getting to the root of some of your personal issues. To give couples therapy the best shot at success, follow these important tips:

- 1) Don't expect miracles in the first few sessions. Hard work will usually precede the excitement and anticipation of realizing that your relationship is going to make it.
- 2) You will learn new relationship skills of sharing, receiving, and affirming each other. These skills must be practiced.
- 3) Your therapist must be someone with whom you both feel comfortable. This is crucial to helping you share feelings, take risks, and be vulnerable.
- 4) Be patient, but expect progress and discuss goals with your therapist.
- 5) Ask the EAP if it is familiar with therapists in your area. It may have a recommendation and can offer valuable input.

## Tranquilizers

Be sure to talk to your doctor about your job functions if you are prescribed minor tranquilizers or sleep aids such as Xanax, Ambien, Valium, Librium, Dalmane, Restoril, or Tranxene. Your doctor may want you to consider modified duty if you work at dangerous heights or require psychomotor skills to maintain balance. Minor tranquilizers are a primary cause of balance disturbances experienced by patients who fall in hospitals. There is reason to suspect that the risk of falls (the most common occupational injury) is similarly increased in the workplace with the use of these medications.

## Agonize Over Exercise?

If you find it hard to feel desirous about exercise, don't feel bad, so does Jack LaLanne. LaLanne is America's godfather of exercise who starred in the popular *The Jack LaLanne Show* in the 1960s. Today, LaLanne is busier than ever, and he turned 90 on September 26. He looks 50! "I hate it!," says LaLanne, who was interviewed on a morning news program. "Do you think I enjoy getting out of a warm bed at 5:00 in the morning? What keeps me going is the benefit." LaLanne's secret is a belief so strong in the need to exercise that motivation overwhelms any resistance. There's no willpower—it's automatic. How to do it: Ask yourself, "What will it cost me if I don't exercise?" "What is it costing me mentally and physically right now not to exercise?" "How will I feel about myself if I start exercising?" Create as many similar questions and thoughtful answers, as you can. Do you feel anxious as a result of this process? If so, it's working. Now, see if your desire and motivation to exercise doesn't feel more automatic than before. Keep your questions and answers handy to reinforce your motivation and don't forget to consult with your physician before starting an exercise program.

FOX NEWS Television Interview, Sept 29, 2004

## Sexual Offenders Registries

The FBI's Crimes Against Children Unit coordinates the development and implementation of the National Sex Offenders Registry (NSOR). This was made possible by the Pam Lychner Sexual Offender Tracking and Identification Act of 1996. All 50 states participate in separate programs to track sexual offenders. It is from these databases that the public can obtain information by name, county, city and zip code with some restrictions. The FBI website listing all 50 state websites is:

<http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/cac/states/htm>



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## *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*

The federal government's "Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005" has been published. Here are a few excerpts, including what's new:

- Consume a sufficient amount of fruits and vegetables while staying within energy needs. Two cups of fruit and two and a half cups of vegetables per day are recommended for a reference 2,000-calorie intake, with higher or lower amounts depending on the calorie level. Select from all five vegetable subgroups (dark green, orange, legumes, starchy vegetables, and other vegetables) several times a week.
- Consume at least three ounces of whole-grain products per day. At least half the grains you consume should come from whole grains.
- Consume three cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products.
- *People over age 50.* Consume vitamin B<sub>12</sub> in fortified foods or in supplements.
- *Older adults, people with dark skin, and people exposed to insufficient ultraviolet band radiation (i.e., sunlight).* Consume extra vitamin D from vitamin D-fortified foods and/or supplements.
- *Women of childbearing age who may become pregnant and those in the first trimester of pregnancy.*

Consume adequate synthetic folic acid daily (from fortified foods or supplements) in addition to food forms of folate from a varied diet.

Source: <http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines>

## *Your Credit Report*

The Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act (FACT Act) signed into law last year allows you to get a free copy of your credit report from Experian, Equifax and Trans Union credit bureaus. You can obtain your free credit reports this year based upon a schedule determined by law. Log on to [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) to see when your state is eligible. A simple verification process is required. You can get your report online or have it sent in the mail. Call **1.877.322.8228** to request your credit reports by phone.

Contact your Employee Assistance Program  
for an appointment:

**800.999.1077**

For 24-hour Crisis Services:

**800.833.3031**