**Employment Communication - A Lab Based Course**
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**Lecture - 09**
**Inter-cultural Communication – Conclusion**

Hello friends. So, we are back again today to the course on Employment Communication. And today we will do lecture 9 and we will be concluding the topic on Inter-cultural Communication.

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So, when we are communicating in a world as we have already discussed in lecture 8- The Introduction to Intercultural Communication. So, the world is highly multicultural, then there are certain requirements and these are the concepts which we will cover in this concluding lecture on intercultural communication.

The first is how to prepare to communicate across cultures, the second, what price do we pay, if we are ignorant of intercultural communication, then we once again define intercultural communication and we move ahead to the demographic picture.

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Moving ahead we will be covering today the need of the situation, the imperative, the need of the hour, how to reduce the strangeness of strangers, that is how to close the cross cultural gap. We will also be covering technology and its effects on intercultural communication. Before we conclude this topic on intercultural communication, there will be some tips will provide you some hints, clues, suggestions, clues to improve once ability to communicate inter-culturally.

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So, let us move on. Now, the first point which we begin with today, is that we must acknowledge the fact that whether as students or even as educators may include effective communication and the ability to understand cultural differences is deficient. There is a need to work in this important area of cross cultural communication.

So, first of all we assess our ability to communicate effectively with persons from different or other cultures. And this is an age we remember, of increased global contact, the world being multicultural, flat organizational structure at the work place, diverse people of different cultures working all together in different countries of the world. Consequently there is a need, urgent requirement to stress on understanding of and to be sensitive to the cultural differences, this is very important.

And the more we are able to work in this area in this important aspect of inter-cultural communication, the more we are able to reduce cultural ignorance, and the more we are able to enhance our cultural awareness of the times and the days which are changing a lot from previous days of our prior generations. The more, please understand we increase our personal preparedness to communicate effectively at the work place.

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Now, what is the cost we pay in case we are culturally ignorant? First of all there is a term which is synonymous to cultural differences which is called diversity, unity in diversity you must have heard it. So, diversity is the recognition and valuing of this difference and this is best done by those who fall in the category of multi culturists. The

term multi culturist, is self-explanatory, it is self-defining, it means and it includes those persons who are respectful of and engaged with persons from distinctly widely different cultures. On the other hand you have on the other end of the spectrum you have those kind of people who are called culturally confused. These are those people who lack understanding of cultural differences, and they may not be interested to understand it either.

Then we come to another important concept which is cultural imperialism. This is the expansion of imperialistic powers dominion or control over the other areas through the cultural aspect. Finally, if we take steps to eliminate cultural misunderstandings, cultural differences, cultural clashes we also call it culture shock, we form more meaningful understandable relations between persons from other cultures whether it is face to face or offline is immaterial. The relationship stands, the relationship is good.

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Now, let us come to the thrust of the lecture and at the outset we define inter-cultural communication. Now, inter-cultural communication is the one important base definition, but we have here on the slide 5 different variants and all are included in inter-cultural communication.

So, inter-cultural communication is interacting with individuals from different cultures. If you talk about the second aspect how this takes place. The first parameter of defining

cultural communication is race. So, number 2, is inter-racial communication which is interpreting and sharing meanings with people across different races. Then we come to number 3, inter-ethnic communication again it is self-explanatory, that is communicating or communication between people from different ethnic groups.

Then we have international communication that is people communicating between different nations like India, Bangladesh or let say Pakistan, US whatever. And the last is intra-cultural communication, please note the spelling intra, i n t r a. Up till now we had 4 inter-cultural, inter-racial, inter-ethnic, international now we have intra-cultural communication intra-cultural communication which is defined as interaction with members of the same racial or ethnic group or co-culture as yours.

So, in, within our country let us say for example, India or Bharat, we have intra-cultural communication. We have more or less the same racial group that is either Aryans or Dravidians, and there are co-cultures or different segments in these two major culturally racial groups in the country.

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Now, there is an element of ethics and communication which is how to see the other people or the other cultures, and in other words as is written in the slide, how to see your culture through the eyes of the others, because this is the one and only way by which we can have successful intercultural communication. That is to see your own culture through

the eyes of the others. This, we have underlined this point because it is important to note and maintain.

Next we have a term cultural imperialism and we have already covered it in the previous slide.

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We move further to define culture and co-cultures or sub cultures. The first point here, the first term to be defined is culture which is a system of knowledge, beliefs, values, customs, behaviors and artifacts. Remember also artifacts, it is very important, most people would not remember this in a definition of culture, but it is very much part and partial of culture. I would say for example, if you are wearing a kada or a bangle and it is part of your culture for example, the Sikh culture they wear a kada or a steel bangle whether male or female. So, these artifacts are very much part of culture.

So, culture has been defined as a system of knowledge beliefs, values, customs, behaviors and artifacts which are acquired, shared and used by members of one community during daily life. And then we come to the group between or within cultures and they are defined as cultures in the sense of co-cultures or subcultures. Co-cultures and subcultures are defined as groups of people or groups of persons who differ in some ethnic or sociological way from the parent culture.

So, let us say for example, if we are speaking about the Dravidian culture towards the southern part of the country India then we have 4 states. Let us say now we have 5 states Telangana, Andhra Pradesh which were formerly Andhra Pradesh we have Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. So, these are co-cultures or the sub cultures of the main culture which is the Dravidian culture.

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Moving further in within these cultures and co-cultures there might be marginalized groups of people. And these are for example, let us say the Dalits or let us say the Harijans whom our Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi called children of god- Harijans children of god.

So, marginalized group is defined as a group whose members feel like outsiders because they may be doing the lowliest of the lowest jobs in the society. They may be manual scavengers, they may be those who are involved in the in the very lowly works available. So, there are 3 ways by which marginalized group, let us say marginalized group once upon a time would also have included gays, lesbians and queers. So, as our saying there are 3 ways by which marginalized group members can try to be included in the main culture or the main stream culture of the place.

The first is assimilation. Assimilation has been defined as the means by which co-culture members attempt to assimilate with members of the dominant culture. So, for example, members of the marginalized group might try to talk about the topics discussed, converse

about the topics a prevalent or common among the dominant culture they might try to dress their way, they might try to behave in their way, they might try to adopt their eating manners or food styles.

Next is accommodation. This is defined as a strategy of the co-culture members who attempt to maintain their cultural identity even while they try for assimilation or let us say they try to establish relationship with members of the dominant culture, what is called the main stream culture. So, as the term is accommodative of, they would try to be accommodated within the dominant culture or the main culture. And this is very well understood by you it is a very common way by which people would ensure their survival as well as retain their uniqueness.

Then we come to separation- the last term. And sometimes marginalized groups in cultures or cultural communities resist the attempt to become part of the mainstream culture. So, they might try to keep safe distance, they will keep their own distance, they will not mix or mingle with members of the dominant culture, they will be secluded among themselves.

For example, let us say you might have heard about the Jarawa tribe in Andaman and Nicobar islands, and this was a group of tribal which until very recently where recluse, they were (Refer Time: 14:50) within themselves. They avoided all kind of means to be accommodated in the mainstream culture of Andaman and Nicobar islands. And even now many of their children or grandchildren have not been exposed to the development of our present day India, not to speak of Andaman and Nicobar islands by itself
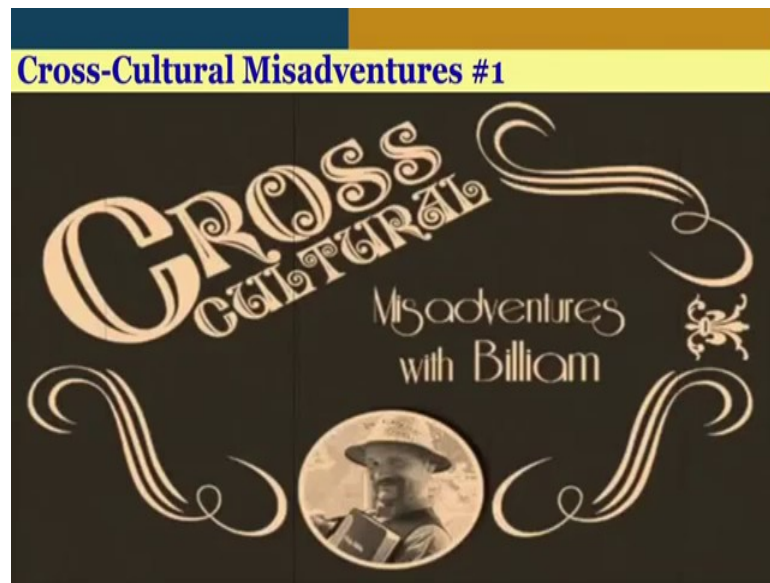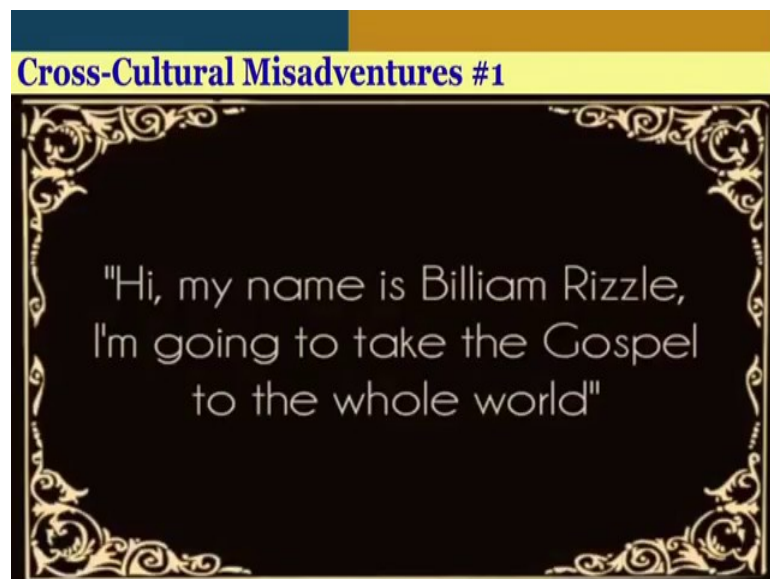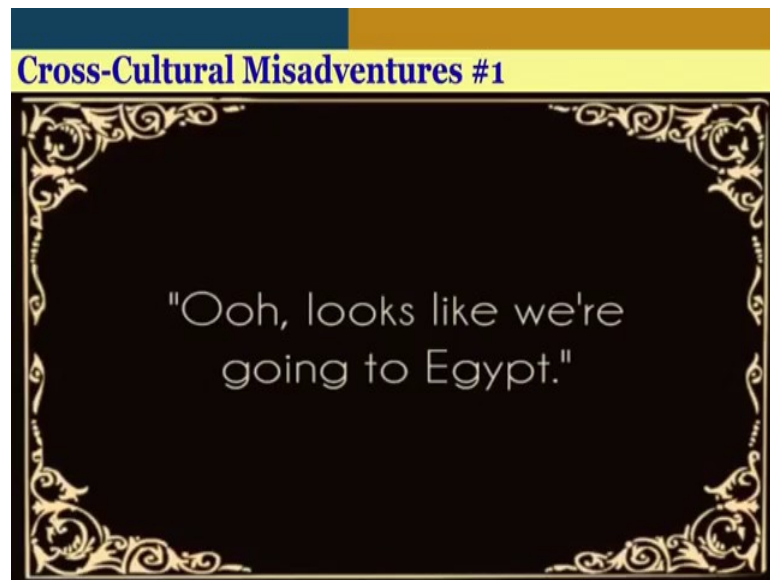
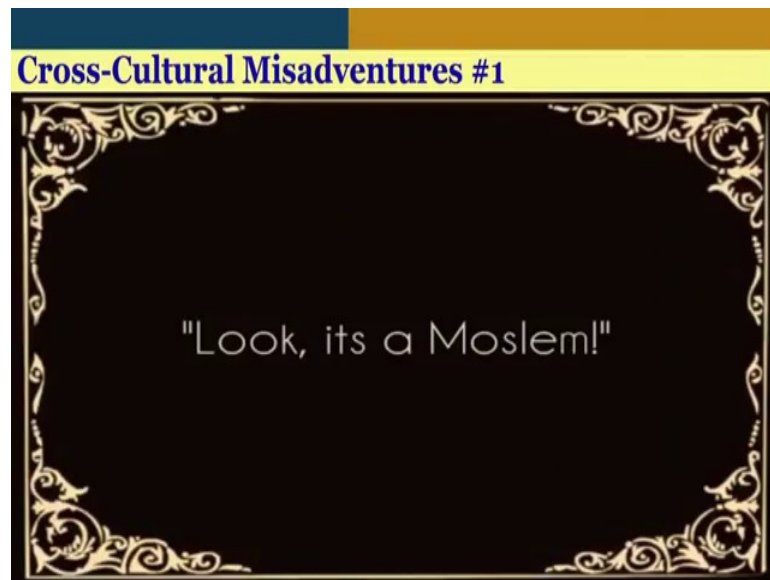I would like to show you a small video before we move ahead.
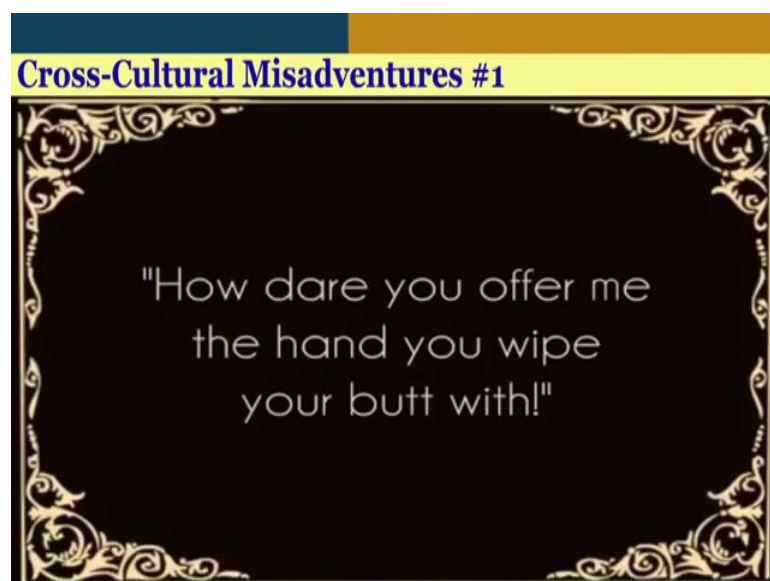
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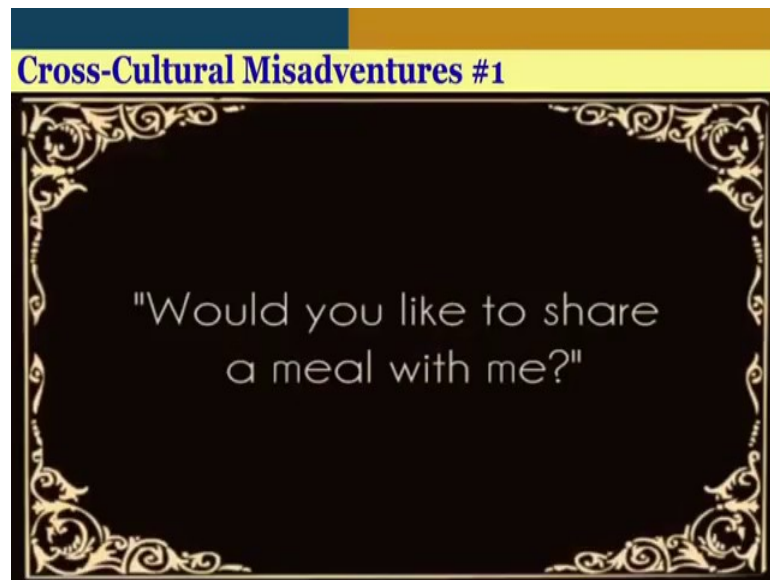


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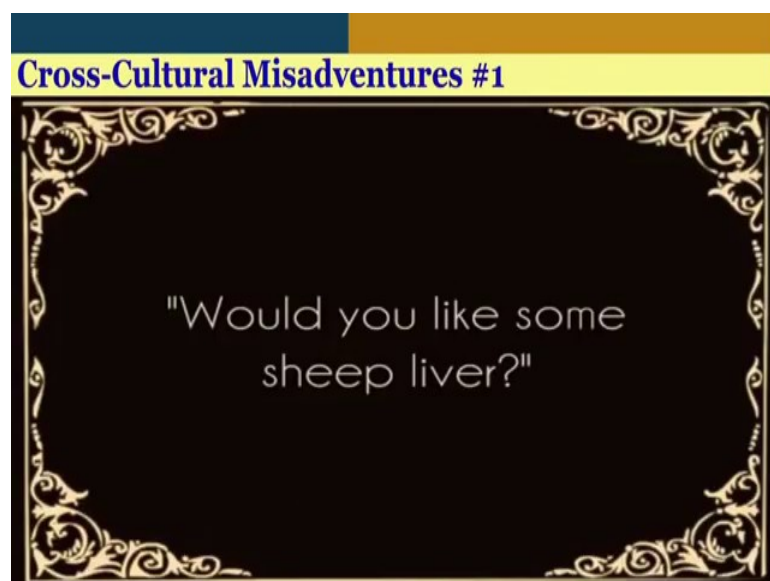
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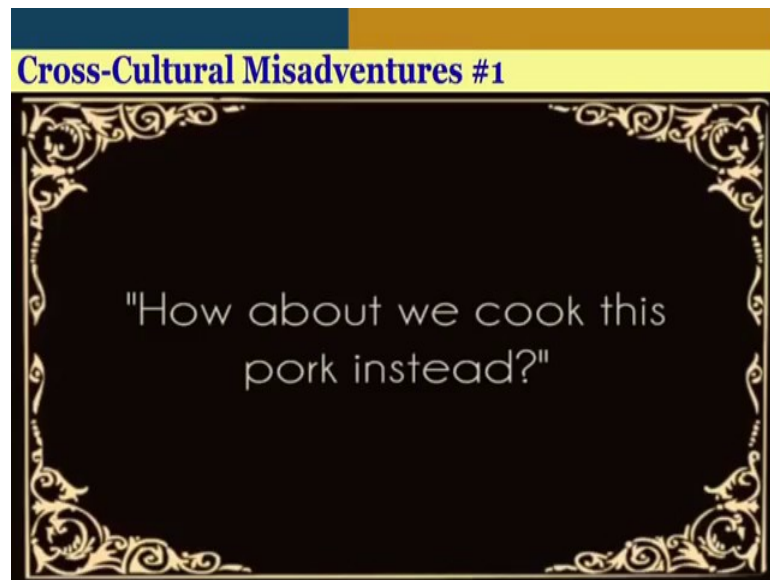


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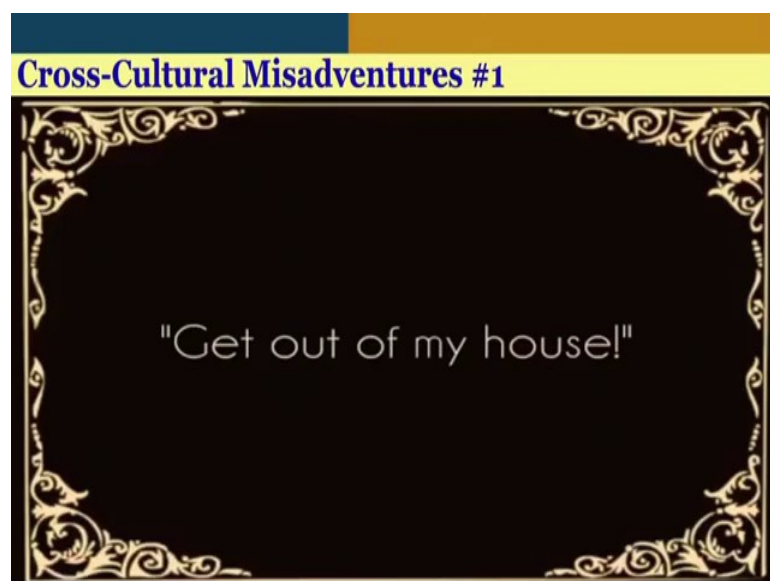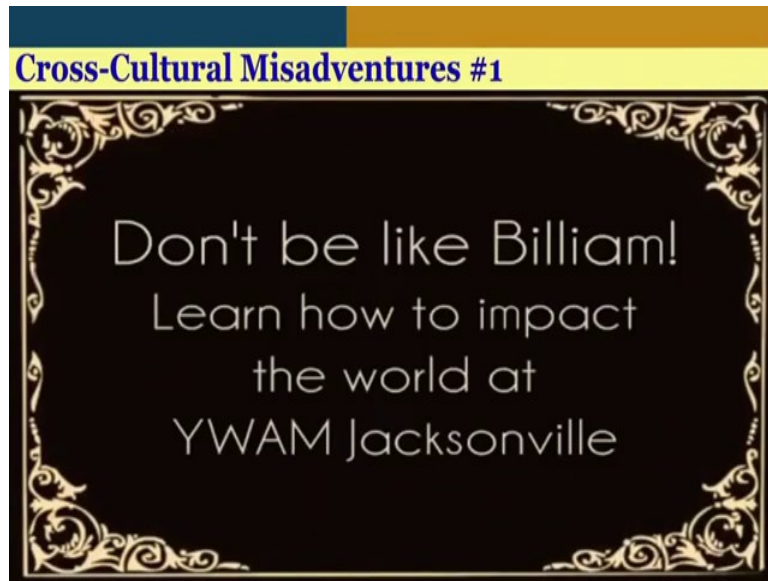
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So, I hope that you have enjoyed this short video, especially with title cross cultural and misadventures. Basically, I have been trying to stress the importance of understanding inter-culture communication so that we do not have these kind of negative episodes, experiences or misadventures or such.

Now, let us go back to cultures and co-cultures. Now, if we have the idea of co-cultures normally there would be trying to assimilate or be accommodated in the mainstream culture. But for this they would have 3 different type of approaches and that would be passive, assertive, aggressive, or confrontational, so passive, assertive or aggressive which are also the 3 main communication styles passive, assertive and aggressive.

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Defining Intercultural Communication (cont.)

TABLE 2.1 Preferred Strategies and Communication Approaches of Marginalized Groups

| Strategy | Communication Approach | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Separation | Passive | Lunching alone, living in an area with similar people |
| Accommodation | Assertive | Wearing a yarmulke to work, wearing a sari to a party |
| Assimilation | Aggressive/confrontational | Staging a protest |

This is the table, table 2.1 which shows the preferred strategies and communication approaches of marginalized groups with the mainstream culture. The first strategy is of separation then the communication approach of the co-culture members would be passive. For example, lunching alone, living in an area with similar people.

As you know very well for example, that in London, UK there is a one area where only Indians are staying. Then we come to the accommodative approach if the co-culture or the marginalized group would like to be accommodated then the communication approach would be assertive, it would be assertive. And for example, this would be shown by wearing yarmulke to work or wearing a sari to a party because they would like to be part of the greater or larger group.

And the third is the strategy assimilation, if this strategy is employed the communication approach which we could resume it under would be aggressive or confrontational, for example, staging a protest.

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So, moving further we all understand by now that culture guides communication in fact, a great and a very renowned researcher in communication Edward T Hall, we have mentioned him in our lecture on body language or nonverbal communication, said that, culture is communication and communication is culture, in other words the entire understanding of communication is based on one idea and that is culture. So, culture guides communication.

Here we need to know again two terms the first- what does it mean when we see that a community or a people are ethnocentric. Ethnocentrism is tendency, to see your own culture has superior to rest of the other cultures. To see negativity in all cultures other than yours. To see yours culture as superior-most.

On the other hand of the scale is cultural relativism and this is acceptance of other cultural groups as equal, not lower in value to your own group. So, of the two, of course, you understand that we must embrace cultural relativism. If we are to succeed, if we are to flourish in the work place today our attitude must be of cultural relativism.

Now, let us look at diversity in more focus, in more depth, in more detail. You all have heard of the term melting pot philosophy. It is concept in the Americas and the idea is that all the communities or all the people of different cultures who came to settle in the great United States, they kind of assimilated within the dominant culture. So, it may be the native Americans who were the first settlers in the United States, it may be the Hispanic Americans, it may be the Chinese American, it may be the African Americans, whatever it is, whoever came, it may be, the white people who came from the United Kingdom, whoever came they embraced the dominant culture of America.

And in fact, they have a national motto, the national motto of Americas is "e pluribus unum", "e pluribus unum", which means *one out of many*. The idea of melting pot philosophy in American literature or American history is that America is a great land and it has assimilated all the people who came from different cultural backgrounds to make this nation great.

So, similar to that is the concept of culture pluralism, cultural pluralism which means adherence to the principles of cultural relativism to relate, to find out similarities and points of commonality with other cultures. So, cultural relativism; those who practice cultural relativism are those who believe in cultural pluralism.

So, if we continue to explore further, the cultural differences across communities and peoples of the world, we have a 4 scales on which we do it first let us say the idea of individualism versus collectivism. In the workplace what happens is, there are two types of cultures in the workplace. The first is the culture which is individualistic and individualistic cultures are those cultures in which the individual goals are stressed. For example, the western societies, the America, the United Kingdom, so on and so forth.

On the other hand our side of the world that is Asian countries, Japan also to certain extent, south Asian countries we are collectivistic cultures in the sense that we believe that the group goals are more important. So, when we talk about individualistic cultures what we mean is the "I" or the group leader is more important and in the in the case of the collectivistic cultures it is the "We" or our collective efforts which have led to the success of the group or the project at the work place which is more important.

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The second scale on which we explore our cultural differences is high context versus low context. And this refers to the idea that there are certain communities or cultures which are highly tradition bound, and they have an indirect way of communication. On the other hand you have low context communication or low context cultures which is about a system or method or scenario or a situation or a group of people or community or their behavior which encourages directness in communication. And it is more important to remember that we are moving to the third aspect of cultural differences which is high power distance and low power distance.

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High power distance cultures are those cultures which are based on power differences in which the subordinates are highly differential to the superior. So, if the boss comes or if the boss is somewhere around most of these people belonging to high power distance culture would be very subservient and bowing and showing all kind of respect to the boss. On the other hand you have low culture power distance, cultures that believe that power should be used only when legitimate. So, you can very well understand that this is the eastern part of the world high power distance cultures and low power distance cultures are those peoples who reside in the western side of the world.

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Fourth one is masculine versus feminine cultures. And masculine cultures are those cultures in which the member's value, male aggressiveness and material symbols of success strength so on and so forth. On the other hand feminine cultures these are those members who value relationships more, they involve with tenderness with each other and they ensure a high quality of their life. The feminine cultures for example, the country called France, and the masculine cultures may be for example, some African countries where male aggressiveness and material success are more important.

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Now, there are some ways by which we can reduce the strangeness of strangers.What I mean by this, is that we can try to be inter-culturally rich or positive, we can increase our inter-cultural communication successfully.

So, let us move further. We need to identify the influences on cultural identity or the idea of the self- the cultural aspect. And on the other hand number two is to think about what is the effect of stereotypes and prejudices on our inter-communication, inter-cultural communication exchanges.

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Stereotypes therefore, are defined as mental images it is not that it actually exists, it is simply a mental image, it is something in your mind you know between the two temples these are about how, these are in fact, dictating how we guide our reactions. So, we stereotype for examples saying that people of the southern part of Africa or people of the southern part of the United States are the Negroes or the Afro-Americans are those who are stereotype tiers violent, given to drunkenness so on and so forth this is stereotyping and this is related to the second type term there which is prejudices it is a positive or a negative prejudgment.

So, for now you might have heard that prejudiced or prejudiced you might have felt that it sounds like something negative, but prejudices are both positive and negative. It is a positive and negative prejudgments, so prejudices this of anything anyone any situation any culture so, for example, I might have a prejudice against let us say Malayalis or whatever.

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Now, we come to the important point of the way in which today technology has impacted inter-culture communication. We are now very active on the social media, we exist as much in virtual neighborhoods as in real communities, and this is the kind of online surrogate community it is not the actual real workplace or living space.

On the other hand we have so much of influx of technology in today's world that there is the idea of a digital divide. There are some people who have too much of access and

control and power and usage of information technology. On the other end of this spectrum are those who have no access to digital media or digital content. So, there are group of people in this digitally wired world who are haves and there are those who are have nots. This is called digital divide which is the information gap between the haves and the have nots.

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They would be some advices on how to improve your ability to communicate inter-culturally. First is to, we must prevent ourselves, rather I think we should control ourselves from formulating expectations base only on our culture because the rest of the world is so many other different cultures.

Number 2, we must try to understand that if our education has been faulty, then we are not able to communicate successfully because it impedes, it is a barrier to our understanding of people across who are belonging to different cultures. And number 3 let us make a commitment to develop communication skills and abilities so that we have a peaceful multicultural world.

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Let us summarize the chapter and let us summarize this topic on intercultural communication. To the extent we reduce cultural ignorance and enhance cultural awareness or relativism become more culturally pluralistic. We increase our personal preparedness to communicate effectively at the workplace or living space as I said. Number 2, there is a need to eliminate cultural misunderstanding so that we can facilitate the development of more meaningful relations between persons belonging to different diverse cultures and societies and backgrounds.

Number 3, inter-cultural communication has been defined as the process of interpreting and sharing. Please remember interpreting and sharing meanings, meanings the message of the communicative act. So, inter-cultural communication has been defined as the process of interpreting and sharing meanings with individuals from different cultures.

Let us move further we need there for to understand differences between general culture that is the main culture and the co-culture, sub cultures. We need to understand revise the meanings of term ethnocentrism, on the other hand, cultural relativism, melting pot philosophy and cultural pluralism. This means if we are able to interpret cultural variations it means we are in other words learning to appreciate the differences between 4 parameters- individualism, collectivism, high contexts low contexts, high power low power, and masculine and feminine cultures. And this will, the understanding we gain from our experience of cultures, other than ours, influences our communication style and the way in which we prefer to act in certain communication styles.

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So, we agree we agree that the lessons which are taught by cultural influence our communication styles and our communication preferences. But still there are certain techniques by which we can in fact, prepare ourselves better to face the communication challenges of today as well as the future. For many of us internet or the digital media is facilitating this task, it is helping us, I am not saying; I am not against technology, but digital media or internet is helping us by bringing diversity and culture into our lives.

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These are the references I have used in the preparation of this lecture- 9.

Thank you so much and God bless you.