

PERSONAL CULTURE REFLECTION

In the book *Cultures and Organizations, Software of the Mind* Dr. Geert Hofstede relates culture to software. Our culture has to do with the early “programming” we receive from our families, friends, playmates, school environment, TV, etc. Much of the programming takes place very early in life.

The questions below may help you think of your own “cultural programming.” Go through the questions on your own first and jot down some notes. Then, have a conversation with someone you trust and with whom you feel comfortable.

This conversation may be uncomfortable for people who had difficult childhood experiences. Please use your best judgment on whether to complete this exercise and with whom you may share it.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

When you grew up...

1. Who took care of you?
2. Where did you live?
3. Were you expected to share?
4. Were you allowed to cry?
5. What happened when you got hurt?
6. Did you compete with other kids?
7. Did you spend most of your days playing or working?
8. Were you encouraged or discouraged to use your imagination?
9. Who were your heroes? What were they like?
10. What are your earliest memories of other cultures / countries?
11. How and what were you taught to keep clean?
12. What were you punished or rewarded for?
13. What do you remember your parents "always saying"?
14. What rules were "sacrosanct?" What rules were ignored?
15. What did you learn about your gender?
16. What did you learn about social class?
17. What did "politeness" mean?
18. What was "taboo"?
19. Do you remember being ashamed? Of what and why?
20. What made you feel proud?

DISCUSSION

1. What do the answers to the questions above suggest about your own cultural programming?
2. What part of your programming are you reproducing for your children?
3. How much experience do you have with people whose early cultural experiences were different from yours?
4. How do early cultural experiences explain cultural differences? (If you thought of specific examples of different “early programming” in the previous question, share them now).
5. How comfortable do you feel with people whose “cultural programming” differs from yours and why?

© 2019 Dr. Cris Wildermuth

Contact me at cris.wildermuth@drake.edu

Master of Science in Leadership Development: www.drake.edu/leadership

Presentation resources: <http://www.professorwildermuth.com/presentations.html>