

# CROSS CULTURAL COACHING:

DEALING WITH CULTURAL COLLISION  
IN COACHING AND MANAGERIAL  
RELATIONSHIPS

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# AGENDA

What is culture? The multiple dimensions of cultural influence

What are your cultural influences?

Cultural stereotyping - helpful or risky?

What are the challenges involved in cross cultural coaching?

Practising cultural intelligence in your coaching practice

# COACHING

*It is important to recognise that coaching itself is a predominantly Western concept and its methodologies may not always apply when coaching across cultures.*



## WHAT IS CULTURE?

Meanings, values, beliefs, expectations and behaviours shared by a particular group of people... that distinguish them from members of other groups

# THREE LEVELS IN HUMAN MENTAL PROGRAMMING

HOFSTEDE 1991





## The Cultural Iceberg

### Surface Culture

Food  
Flags Festivals  
Fashion Holidays Music  
Performances Dances Games  
Arts & Crafts Literature Language

### Deep Culture

**Communication Styles and Rules**  
facial expressions gestures eye contact  
personal space touching  
body language tone of voice  
handling and displaying of emotion  
conversational patterns in different social situations

<b>Notions of:</b> courtesy and manners friendship leadership cleanliness modesty beauty	<b>Concepts of:</b> self time past and future fairness and justice roles related to age, sex, class, family, etc.
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**Attitudes toward:**  
elders adolescents dependents  
rule expectations work authority  
cooperation vs. competition  
relationships with animals age sin death

**Approaches to:**  
religion courtship marriage raising children  
decision-making problem-solving

CULTURE IS NOT STRICTLY A NATIONAL PHENOMENON ...  
IDENTIFY WHICH OF THESE INFLUENCES PREVAILS

**Nation** **Region** **City** **Class** **Ethnicity** **Organisation** **Religion** **Gender** **Generation**

**How has the internet impacted cultural differences?**

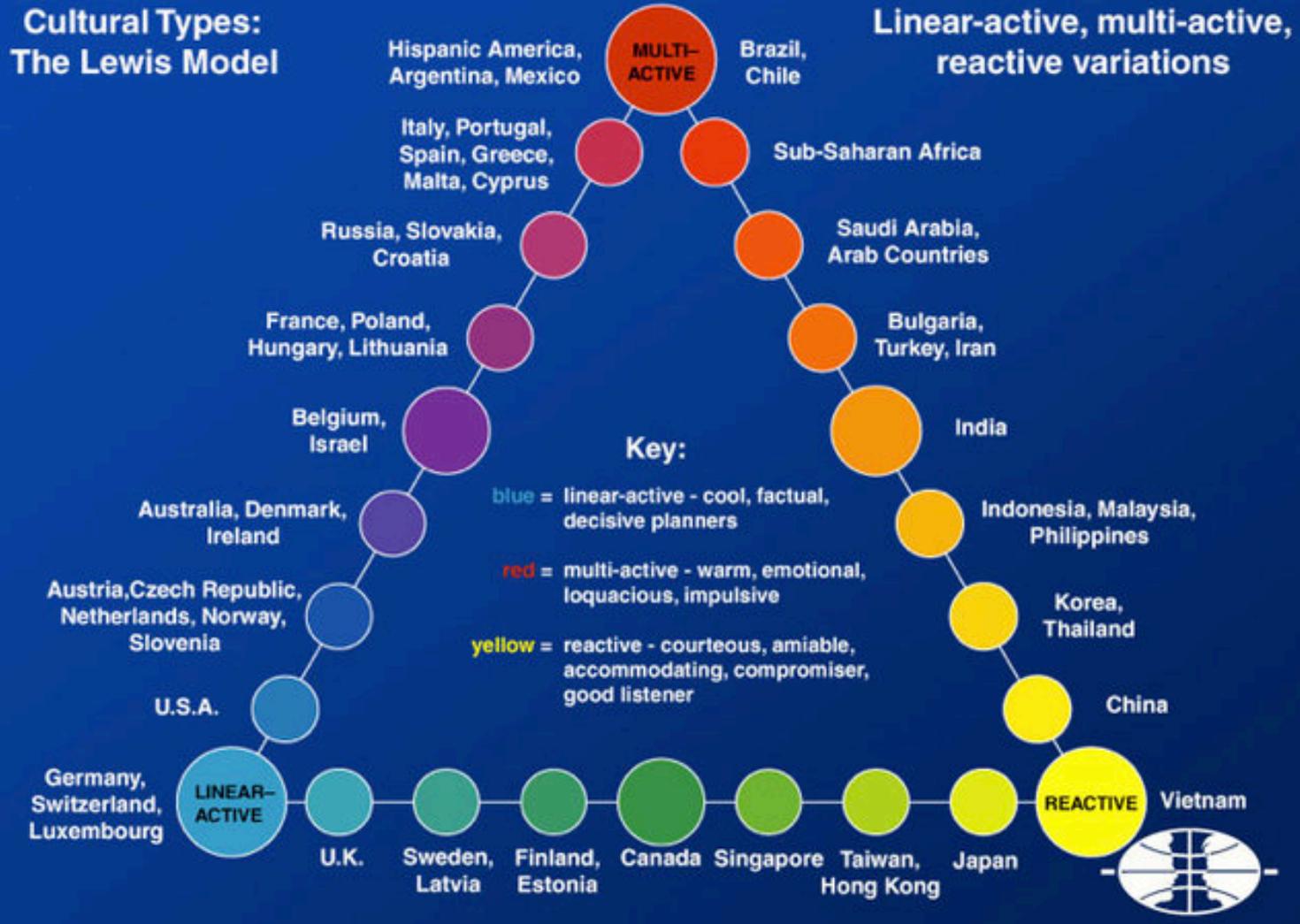


# THE TEN DIMENSIONS OF CULTURE



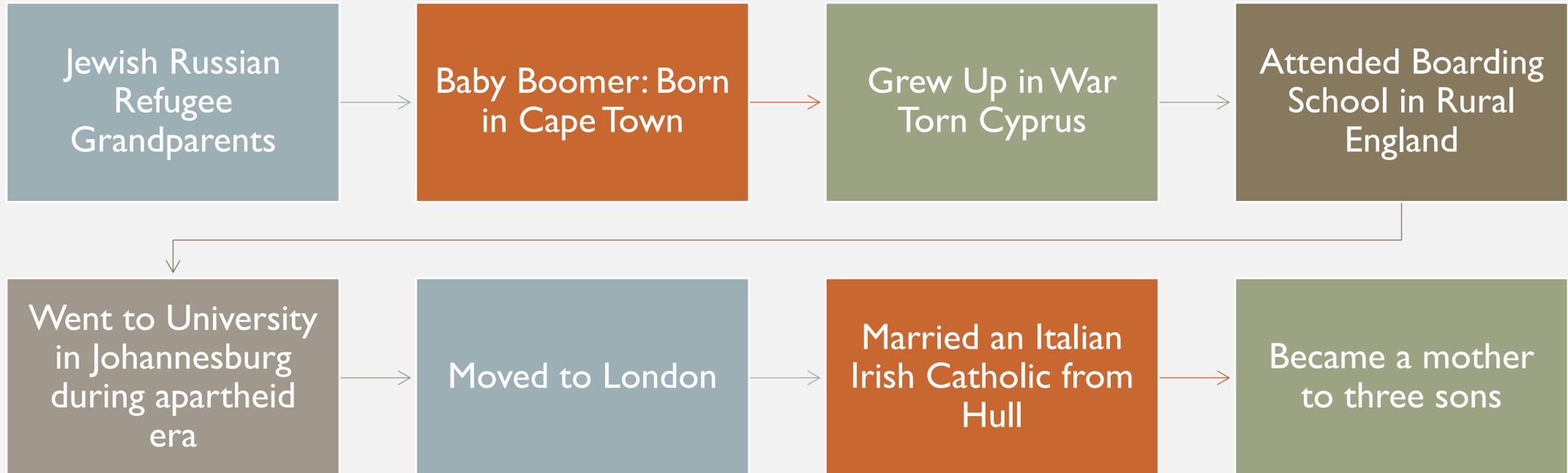
# Cultural Types: The Lewis Model

Linear-active, multi-active, reactive variations

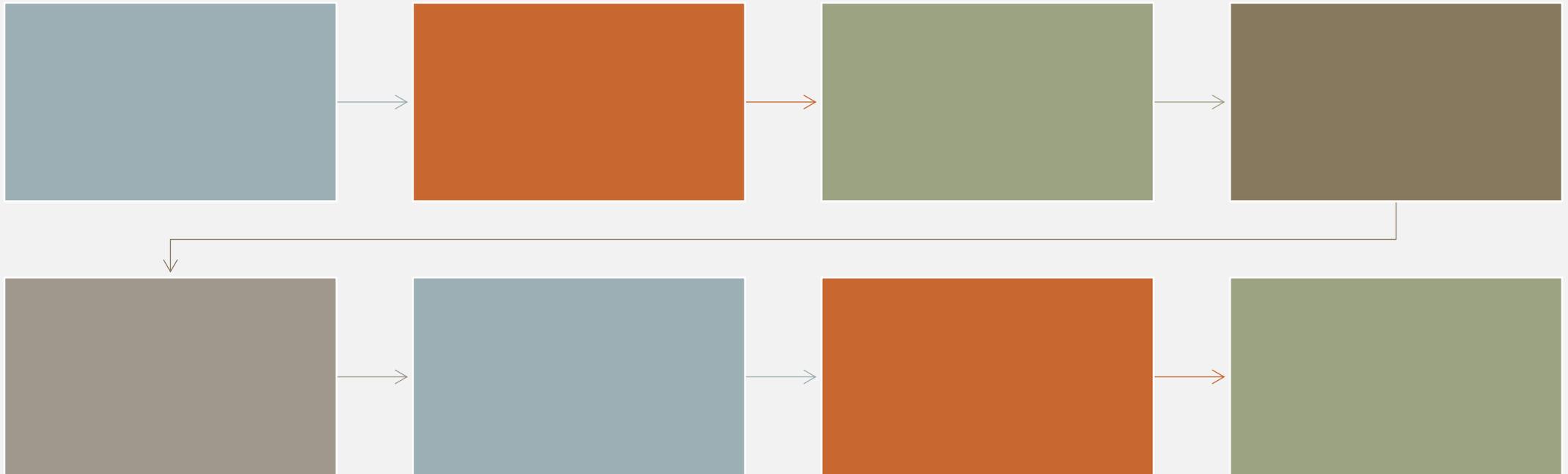


LINEAR-ACTIVE	MULTI-ACTIVE	REACTIVE
Talks half the time	Talks most of the time	Listens most of the time
Does one thing at a time	Does several things at once	Reacts to partner's action
Plans ahead step by step	Plans grand outline only	Looks at general principles
Polite but direct	Emotional	Polite, indirect
Partly conceals feelings	Displays feelings	Conceals feelings
Confronts with logic	Confronts emotionally	Never confronts
Dislikes losing face	Has good excuses	Must not lose face
Rarely interrupts	Often interrupts	Doesn't interrupt
Job-oriented	People-oriented	Very people-oriented
Sticks to facts	Feelings before facts	Statements are promises
Truth before diplomacy	Flexible truth	Diplomacy over truth
Sometimes impatient	Impatient	Patient
Limited body language	Unlimited body language	Subtle body language
Respects officialdom	Seeks out key person	Uses connections
Separates the social and professional	Mixes the social and professional	Connects the social and professional

# MY CULTURAL BACKGROUND



# YOUR CULTURAL BACKGROUND: FILL IN THE BLANKS



WHAT ARE YOUR  
CULTURAL  
INFLUENCES?

Which has influenced you most?

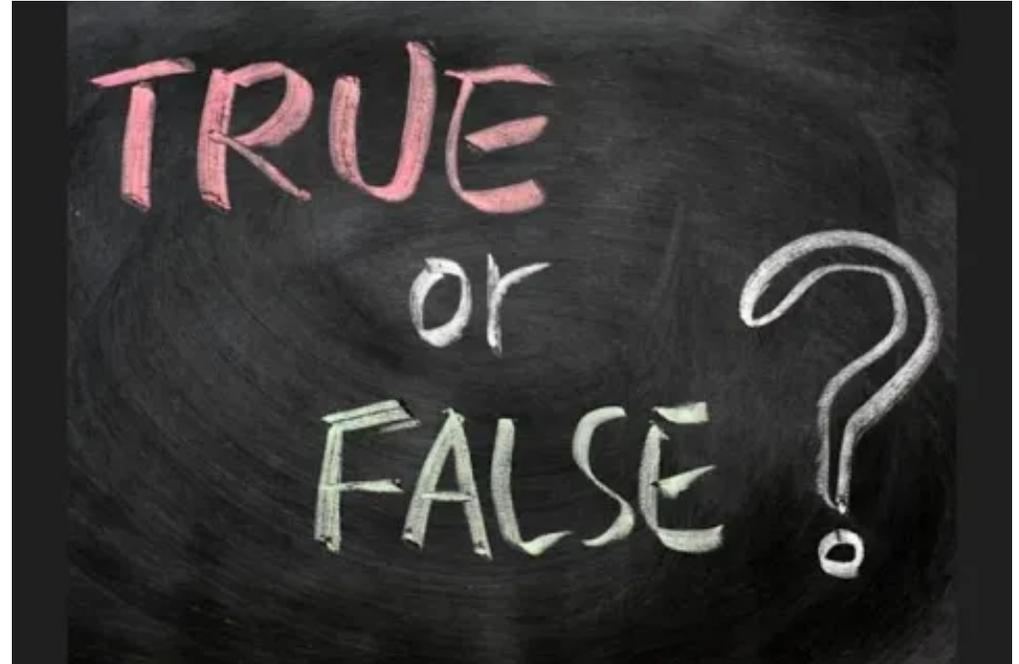
- Your Generation
- Religious Beliefs
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Nation/Regional Identity
- Class
- Organisation Type



## CULTURAL STEREOTYPING? USEFUL OR DANGEROUS?

*'By focusing on the cultural roots of national behaviour in society and business we can forecast with suprising accuracy how people will react to situations which enables us to interact successfully.'*

*'When Cultures Collide' Richard Lewis*



CULTURAL  
COMPETENCE

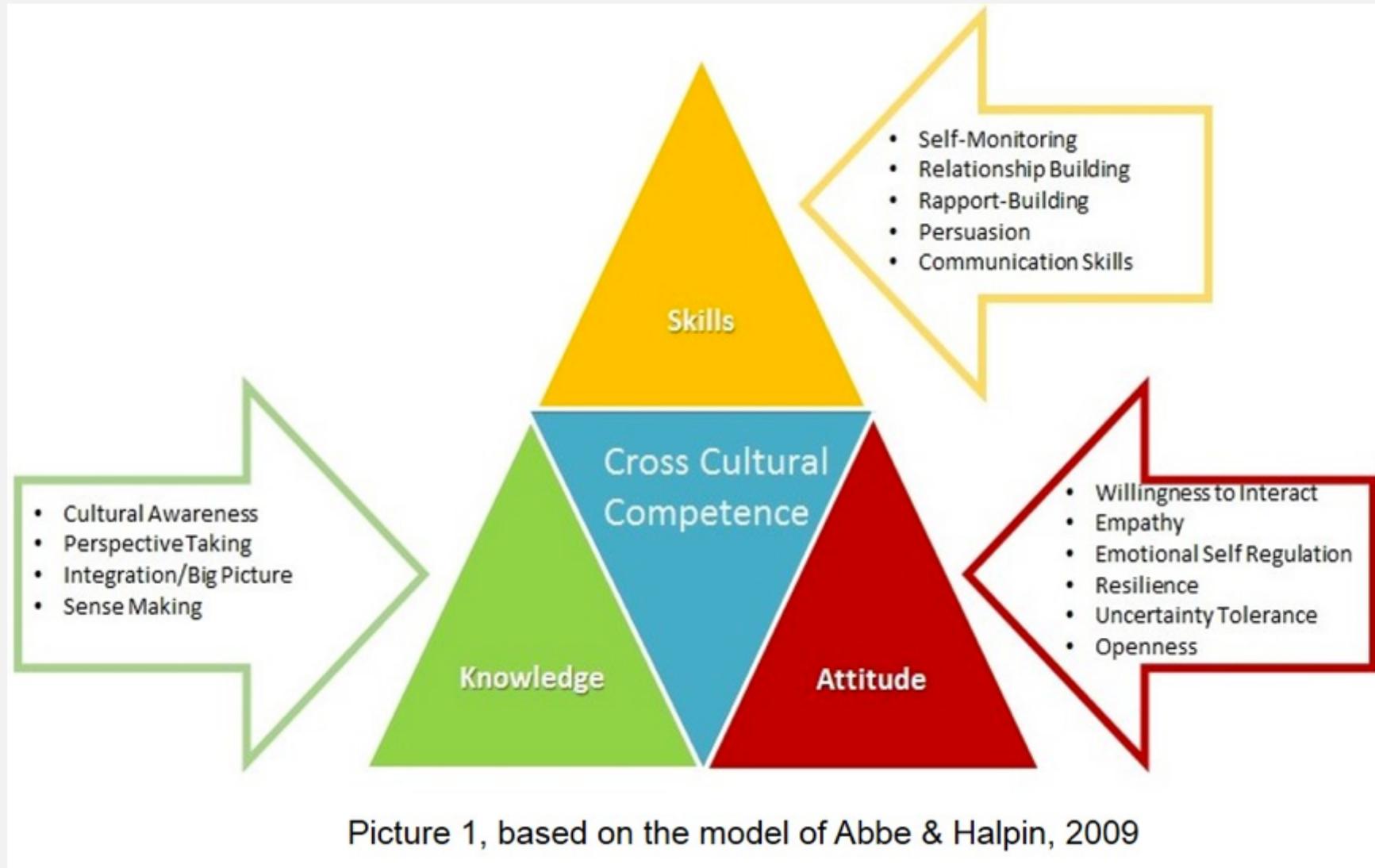
the ability to understand,  
communicate with and effectively  
interact with people across cultures

being aware of one's own world view

developing positive attitudes  
towards **cultural** differences.

gaining knowledge of different  
**cultural** practices and world views.

# CROSS CULTURAL COMPETENCE EXPLAINED



# CAREER COACHING

- Self Promotion: Humility vs Arrogance
- Networking: Fear vs Confidence
- I vs We



## Executive/Leadership Coaching Issues:

- COMMUNICATION
- MISUNDERSTANDING
- CONFLICT
- ERRORS
- UNEXPECTED BEHAVIOUR



AREAS OF CROSS  
CULTURAL  
MISCOMMUNICATION

Assumption of similarities

Language differences

Non Verbal Misinterpretations

Preconceptions and stereotypes

Tendency to judge

Unexpected Behaviour

# UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

We all have some level of cultural conditioning which affect our judgement and actions - but we may not be aware of it

“We don’t see things as they are  
but as we are”

Anais Nin



# APPRECIATION OF CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT



Understand coachee personal views/  
experiences and validate them



Respect – consolidate relationship and  
mutual respect



Exploration – bring insights into  
conscious awareness



Adaptation – leverage differences/  
generate culturally appropriate  
solutions



Are you too  
influenced by  
stereotypical  
assumptions?



Constantly  
question  
your  
prejudices

## 6 PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE CROSS CULTURAL COACHING

Study the culture

Know thyself

Create rapport, trust and a safe place

Consider the context

Include cultural  
understanding/expectations in the  
contracting arrangement

Trust the process



# SOURCES

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