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The word culture comes from a Latin verb • colere • which means to tend, cultivate, till or guard. Every culture comprises of elements like language, beliefs, ideas, customs, institutions, codes, tools, taboos, techniques, artworks, rites, symbols and ceremonies. It has always played a vital role in human evolution, letting the humans to adjust their environment according to their own purposes. Every human society posses its own unique culture or sociocultural system.

The Cross-cultural communication focuses on how the people belonging to distinct cultural backgrounds communicate with each other. The cultural diversity programs channelize some guidelines that help people coming from diverse cultures to communicate better with each other.

Culture can be defined as:

1. Culture is the heartware of a nation/race/culture; its soul and what makes it tick
2. Culture reflects widely shared assumptions and beliefs about life
3. Culture is so embedded that most people do not and cannot analyze it
4. Culture is what is •normal•™ around here
5. Culture is learned from our superiors and role models

Stereotyping can be misleading. • However, a national group does have common traits which we recognize when they are together. Individuals in that group will have fewer or more of them. • For example, some groups are more restrained than others who are more outgoing.

Nowadays, the cross-cultural awareness has become very important. Now what's™ the reason behind that? Each cultural world operates according to its own internal dynamics, its own principles, and its own laws, influencing how we think as human beings. • Becoming aware that other cultures are different, we begin to recognize and understand the •silent language• and •conditioned behavior• existing beyond people's™ conscious awareness. • We become sensitive to other meanings.

Cross-culture is widely accepted in the international context of trade and diplomacy, but it can also to be found on your doorstep. • The staff you employ may come from different regions, or walks of life, and have different aspirations. • You may even employ foreigners. Customers, too, are very diverse, having preferences and expectations all of their own.

Now, let's™ see some of the cross-cultural differences. Culture is how we communicate to the world. • There are some common threads that run through all cultures and can be divided into three parts: how we communicate through words, material things, and behaviour.

1. Words are the medium of business, politics and diplomacy: Written and spoken
2. Material things are normally indicators of status and power.
3. Behavior creates feedback on how others feel about us: social conditioning and learned responses.

• The Software of the Mind •

- Perceptions, values, and belief systems are not the same thing and are different for everyone. Above all, they affect each other and constantly interact; a dynamic relationship
- Everything, including perceptions of reality, is relative and contextual
- Reality is less important than one's perception of reality
- It is not the stimulus that produces specific human reactions but rather how the stimulus is perceived
- People act or react on the basis of the way in which they perceive the external world

Deborah Swallow is an International keynote speaker & seminar leader having 15 years of experience in working in more than thirty countries addressing the complexities of people working internationally across multiple cultures and helped the individuals and organizations to gain an authentic competitive edge and win in international markets. See more information on cultural diversity or Cross cultural communication at <http://www.deborahswallow.com/2009/08/17/culture-the-heartware-of-the-soul-and-the-software-of-the-mind/>

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For last fifteen years, Deborah Swallow worked in over thirty countries addressing the complexities of people working internationally across multiple cultures . For more information on cultural diversity or a [Cross Cultural Communication](#), visit us on the web.

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