SUCCESSFUL CULTURAL ADAPTATION

U. of Haifa

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Transitions and Resources, Inc.
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My background:

Graduated from:
- Cornell
- Brandeis
- Columbia

Family:
- 2 relocations to the US
- 1 sibling and 1 child in the UK, family in US

Background:
- Brandeis University
- U.of Lousville
- Hebrew University
- Lead cross cultural training for Intel, Motorola, start ups, students, olim
- Edit doctoral student college essays and create resumes
- Career transitions support for second careers, spouse career transition and relocation support
Topics:

**Cultural Differences**
- CAP
- Cultural iceberg
- Intercultural communications
- How are Israelis perceived?
- Preparation for relocation
- New challenges
- Discussion points with university
- Pitfalls
- Spouse’s career options
- Family matters
- Stereotypes
- Tips
WHAT IS CULTURE?

- Culture is to a group what memory is to an individual.
- Culture is the collective programming of the mind.
- A system of behavior that helps us act in a familiar or accepted way.
- It includes behavior patterns, norms, expectations, basic values and implicit assumptions.
- The way in which we’re programmed to behave.
Multiple Factors at Play

- Personalities
- Distance
- Functional Cultures
- Corporate Culture
- Business Relationship
- Technology
- Gender
- Time

National Culture
The Cultural Iceberg

Surface Culture

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

Notions of:
- courtesy and manners
- friendship
- leadership
- cleanliness
- modesty
- beauty

Concepts of:
- self
- time
- past and future
- fairness and justice
- roles related to age, sex, class, family, etc.

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
Deep Culture Unconscious Rules - Far Below Surface

- Notions of Modesty
- Ideas about Leadership
- Tempo of Work
- Ideals of Childrearing
- Social Interaction Rate
- Nature of Friendships
- Tone of Voice
- Attitudes Towards Elders
- Patterns of Group Decision-Making
- Preference for Competition or Cooperation
- Problem-Solving Roles and attitudes in Relation to Age, Sex, Class, Occupation

- Individualism vs Group focus
- Often times aren’t even realized.
- Value-Based

“You just don’t DO that!”
“What are you DOING?”

Unspoken, invisible rules are ingrained in each society regarding:

- Courtesy
- Conversational Patterns
- Concept of Time
- Personal Space
- Rules of Conduct
- Facial Expressions
- Non-Verbal Communication
- Body Language - Touching, Eye-Contact
- Patterns of Handling Emotions
- Uncertainty avoidance vs certainty
- Risk and change aversion
5 ASPECTS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

1. COMMUNICATION STYLE
   - Direct...............................................................Indirect
   - Expressive..........................................................Reserved

2. PERSONAL BOUNDARIES
   - Private.........................................................................Public
   - Close ........................................................................Distant

3. TIME
   - Linear.........................................................................Multi-tasking
   - Short-term....................................................................Long-term

4. RULES/ STRUCTURE
   - Fixed rules..................................................................Flexible rules

5. AUTHORITY
   - Equality......................................................................Hierarchy, use of titles
Indirect vs Direct Communication

**Neutral:**
- That’s an interesting viewpoint.
- Let me think it over.
- Can I get back to you on that?
- I will do what I can.
- You may have a point.
- Thank you for your time.

**Israeli:**
- I don’t think it will work.
- My research team will not like that.
- I will tell you later.
- I know it won’t work.
- You don’t know what you are talking about.
- Don’t waste any more of my time.
PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

Examples

- Distance
- Touching
- Using other’s property
- Sneezing
- Alcohol gel
- What is private?
- What borrowing signifies

- Kissing
- Handshakes
- Elevators
- Opening doors
- Sharing an office
RELATION TO RULES

- How to fail a driving test
- IF you dial 911 instead of 011
- Walking your dog
- Leaving children home alone
- Offering candy
- Who can pick up your child from daycare/school
- School manual and rules
- Put it in writing
- Tax return in US
- Children undressing in public at the beach
- Standing in line
- Overdraft
Common issues:
- Advance notice time
- Arriving on time
- When is too early/late to call
- Weekend time = holy
- Not multi-tasking during faculty meetings
- Showing up to events
- Need to RSVP

- Relationships are slower to develop abroad.
- Don’t expect instant rapport.
- Promptness in attending meetings.
- Concept of 9-5, lunch hour
- Non-Jewish holidays, vacation days
RELATION TO AUTHORITY

- How to address teachers, service providers, police
  - Standing in line
  - Follow protocol
  - Politeness = phony? or friendliness + respect
  - Tone of voice
  - In UK, you have to register with police.

- In UK, clinic appointments are not made with you but for you.
- BY THE BOOK
OUR HEADS ARE WIRED DIFFERENTLY
Decoding British Speech

Use of understatement

- "You could say that".
- That is an interesting project, we should consider it.
- Your child works very intuitively.
- What is behind the language?
- I would advise you not to say that.
- I would shelve that project.
- He is completely disorganized.
Foreign vs Israeli Communication Patterns

Direct Eye Contact:
Vocal patterns:
Animation/Emotion:
Gestures:
Turn taking and pause time:
Touch
Timing
Personal Space (distance) - Bubble
Focus (on individual vs group)
Public display of affection PDA=
Negative Stereotypes about Israelis

Arrogant
Dismissive
Argumentative and loud
Aggressive
Impolite
Never on time
Stick to their own
Tactless
Talk about taboo issues- vote, age, money, religion, marital status
Why are Israelis called "sabras"?

Positive:
- Proud
- Highly intelligent
- Very family oriented
- Good business people
- Patriotic
- Hard working
- Creative
- Good innovators
DO NOT ASSUME ○ Behaviors that are viewed as normal by one side have a completely unexpected impact on the other.

מה שרואים מכן לא רואים משם ○
How to disagree varies in each country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISAGREEMENT</th>
<th>RESULT:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition of what is best way to be professional and correct business practices varies across borders.</td>
<td>- mutual blaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences often lead to surprise, disappointment, and even anger.</td>
<td>- disagreements</td>
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<td>- misunderstandings, demands</td>
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<td>- slowdowns</td>
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<td>- defensive behavior</td>
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<td>- criticism of your work</td>
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<td>- mutual lack of trust</td>
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British stiff upper lip
Different Communication Styles:

**WHAT I HEAR**

- NO way!
  - You are challenging my authority.
- YOU DON'T CARE.
  - NO CHANCE IT WILL BE DONE ON TIME.
  - You totally disagree and think you are the one who decides.

**WHAT YOU SAY**

- לא נראה לי, ככה זה פוחת
  - נכו לנוشعית.
- אני יכול להסכים לזה.
- אין לי זמן בשביל זה.
-אולי זה יהיה מוכן ещё שבועיים.
- לא מקובל עלי.
**Power Distance - Hofstede**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Power Distance Culture</th>
<th>Low Power Distance Culture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○ Subordinates expect to be told what to do.</td>
<td>○ Subordinates challenge authority.</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ The ideal department head is a kind autocrat, good parent.</td>
<td>○ Director encourages subordinates to challenge him/her.</td>
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<td>○ Everyone knows his/her place.</td>
<td>○ Authority has to be earned.</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Subordinates do not bypass authority.</td>
<td>○ Hierarchy tends to be flatter and less defined.</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Privileges and status symbols for more senior professors are accepted and expected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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Bottom line:

- Don't expect to be treated with the respect you may be used to.
- Show respect and deference to those higher up the ladder, reflected by language, behavior and protocol.
- Relationships with staff may be more distant than you are used to.
- Do not base judgments of people on appearance, demeanor, privileges or status symbols.
CULTURAL ADAPTATION PROCESS

IN ISRAEL

HONEYMOON

CULTURE SHOCK

PARTIAL ADAPTATION

IMMERSION,

MASTERY

BI-CULTURAL
CAP U-CURVE

- **Honeymoon**: euphoria, enjoyment, newness, excitement
- **Culture shock**: frustration, disappointment, loneliness, comparison with home country יאושטшим
- **Adaptation**: recovery, learning, adjustment, accepting differences
- **Mastery**: feel more at home, integration, bilingual, dual culture, identity
- Reverse culture shock upon return
CAP TIMEFRAME

- **Honeymoon** (0 - 2 Months)
- **Cultureshock** (3 - 9 Months)
- **Adjustment** (9 - 48 Months)
- **Mastery** (> 48 Months)
סימפטומים של הלם תרבות

• פריצת בכי
• עגועים ליבית
• הסתגרות
• אכילה, שתייה ושינה כפיייתם
• ביטת
• עוזי נמק
• סטריאוטיפ שלילי
• לגב, אנシーמקומיים
• חוסר התמצאות
• מחלוסף
• אובדן
• מ khảים
• חוסר עבודה
• אין
• עייפות
• זהירות
• דיכאון
• חסד
• ניכור
• לולמוד
• средне
• תרגו
• נוכחה
Discussion points with university:

- Salary or grant - amount; will it be federal tax exempt in US?
- Medical/dental/vision insurance - extra benefits (or you pay) & when does it begin?
- Relocation help - tickets, finding housing, shipping books/when to arrive
- Accommodations - lists? options? advice?
- Requests/assumptions (office space, lab equipment, budget)
- Campus parking permit (can cost a small fortune)
- Ask for their help to get you priority in the university's daycare/housing queues.
- Do not assume anything just because others get it there/elsewhere. You need to ask.
- Job board/ ride board/ faculty housing
What do these mean?

1. asap
2. Bank holidays (UK)
3. playdate
4. EST
5. double coupons
6. TBA
7. TDA
8. CPA
9. K-p
10. the john
11. PC
12. the Brownies
13. blue laws
14. lose your marbles
15. Ivy League
16. in UK: alright
Pitfalls

- How to write dates
- Paying credit card bills, getting bank account
- Overdraft – fuggetaboutit
- Timing - promptness, don’t call too early
- Use of slang
- Dress code
- Use of cellphones, road behavior
- Email etiquette
- Small talk

Challenges

- Establishing credit
- Family password
- Cross cultural minefields (Don’t try to make people more comfortable by asking them personal questions, or by giving your department head feedback.)
- Kids’ behavior-lining up, playdates, noise
Family Matters

**Preparation**
- Discuss, explain
- Use bedtime stories to share and prepare together
- Bring photos, favorite books, objects, toy
- Register kids *way* in advance
- Connect with other Israelis
- Create realistic expectations
- *Create a countdown*
- *Arrange housing: Craig’s list*
- *Read kids books about moving*

**Adjustment**
- Join free PJ library
- Weekend Skype dates
- Look into JCC, Bet Hillel, synagogues, Jewish summer camp, Israel – X Chamber of Commerce, Israeli House eg: in Boston, DC
- Freebies: public library, adult ed, JCC lectures
- Select fun shared activity for each of you on long weekends
- *Maintain routines and traditions*
- *Try new activities*
“Trailing” Spouse Issues

**Career Transition**
- Plan way ahead.
- Develop a job search plan, skills and needs assessment, resume.
- Explore new directions and effective self-marketing tactics.
- Explore goals to work, study, intern or volunteer.
- Get coaching and support throughout.
- **Have official university transcripts translated and notarized here.**

**Couple Issues**
- Revised division of labor in home
- Make sure your family is happy.
- Spouse adjustment takes longer.
- Spouse often faces issues of lack of identity, derailed career plans and self-worth.
What about career opportunities for a son or daughter?

- enrichment
- ESL language development
- part-time job
- OJT internship
- new experience
- demonstration of experience
- NON MATRICULATED STUDENT, STATE RESIDENCE STATUS
- employment
- JVS
- employment in the Jewish community
- HEBREW SCHOOL
Israeli names

- Hallel = Halal
- Yoni = Joni
- Raya = Ray ah
- Drori = Dori
- Maoz = ?X!?$%!
- Gad
- Moran
- Dudu
- Osnat
- Yifat
BDS on campus

- Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
- Anti-Israel activity and anti-Semitic incidents on campus are on the rise.
- There is a surge in attempts to pass academic boycotts of Israel.
- How to react if you are boycotted or slandered?
Success Factors

- Openness to working differently
- Flexibility
- Diversity as an opportunity
- Quick adaptation to differences
- Show cultural empathy
- Be less judgmental → understanding
- Work on your stereotypes
Dealing with cultural adaptation

- Israeli at home but not at work?
- Find and create a support system.
- Ask other foreigners for advice.
- Challenge your comfort zone.
- Read www.israelisabroad.
- Develop an aptitude for adventure.
- המועצה היהודית-אמריקנית IAC
- When in Rome...
6 skills that can enhance your intercultural competence:

1. Acceptance
2. Sensitivity
3. Compromise
4. Humor
5. Adaptability – open mindedness
6. Situational flexibility
7. Learning agility
GOOD LUCK!

- Judy Feierstein, CEO

Transitions and Resources

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