

LIVING WITH CHANGE

HOW LIFE IN THE THIRD CULTURE IMPACTS MKs/TCKs

Plenary 3 – Ruth E. Van Reken

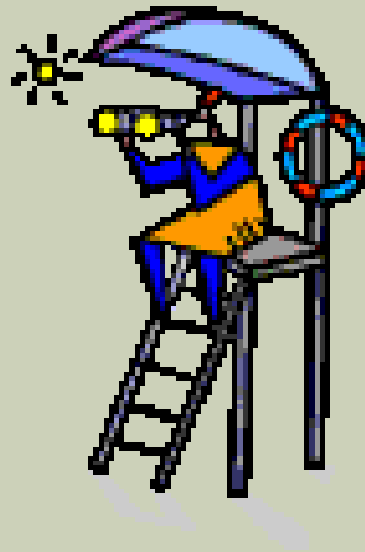
Euro TCK

April 27, 2013

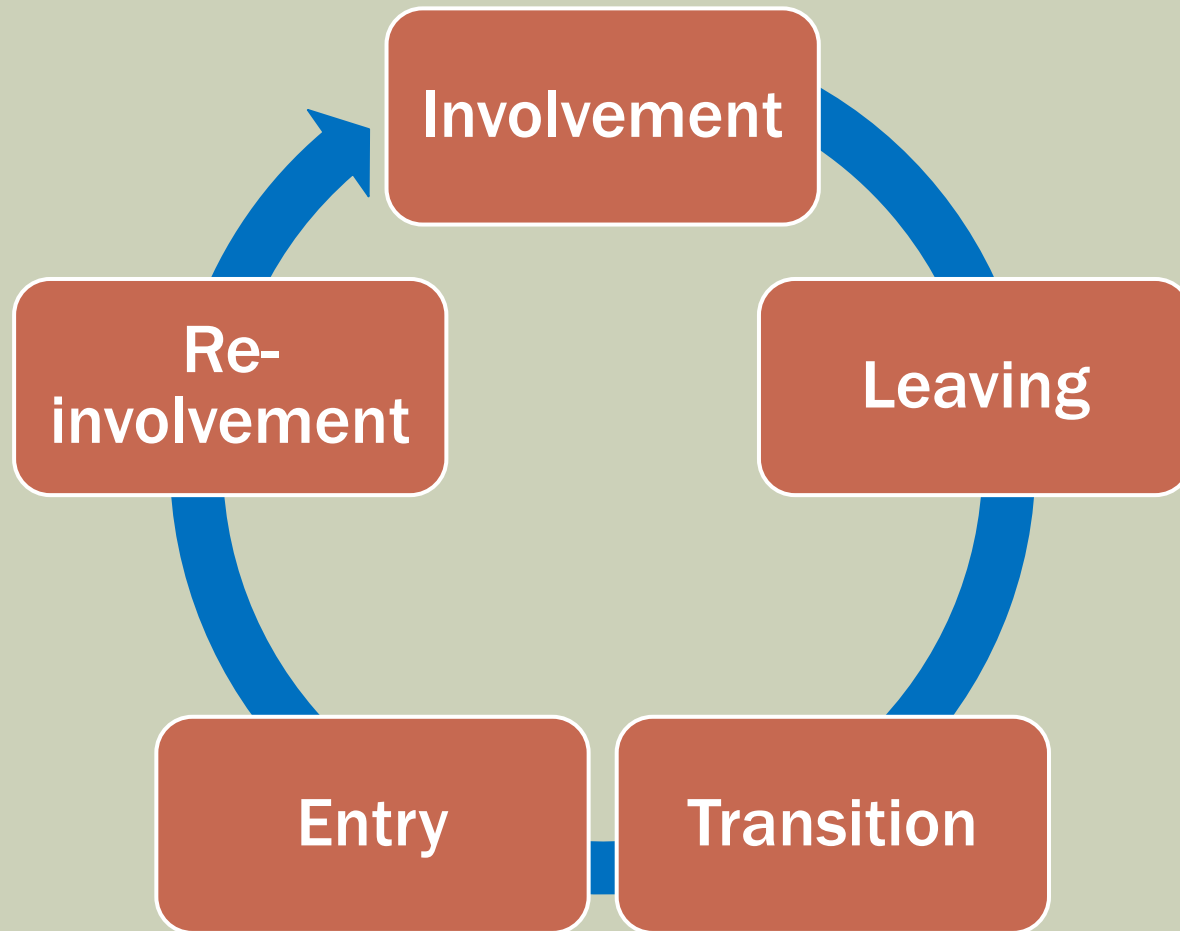
Friolzheim, Germany

OVERVIEW

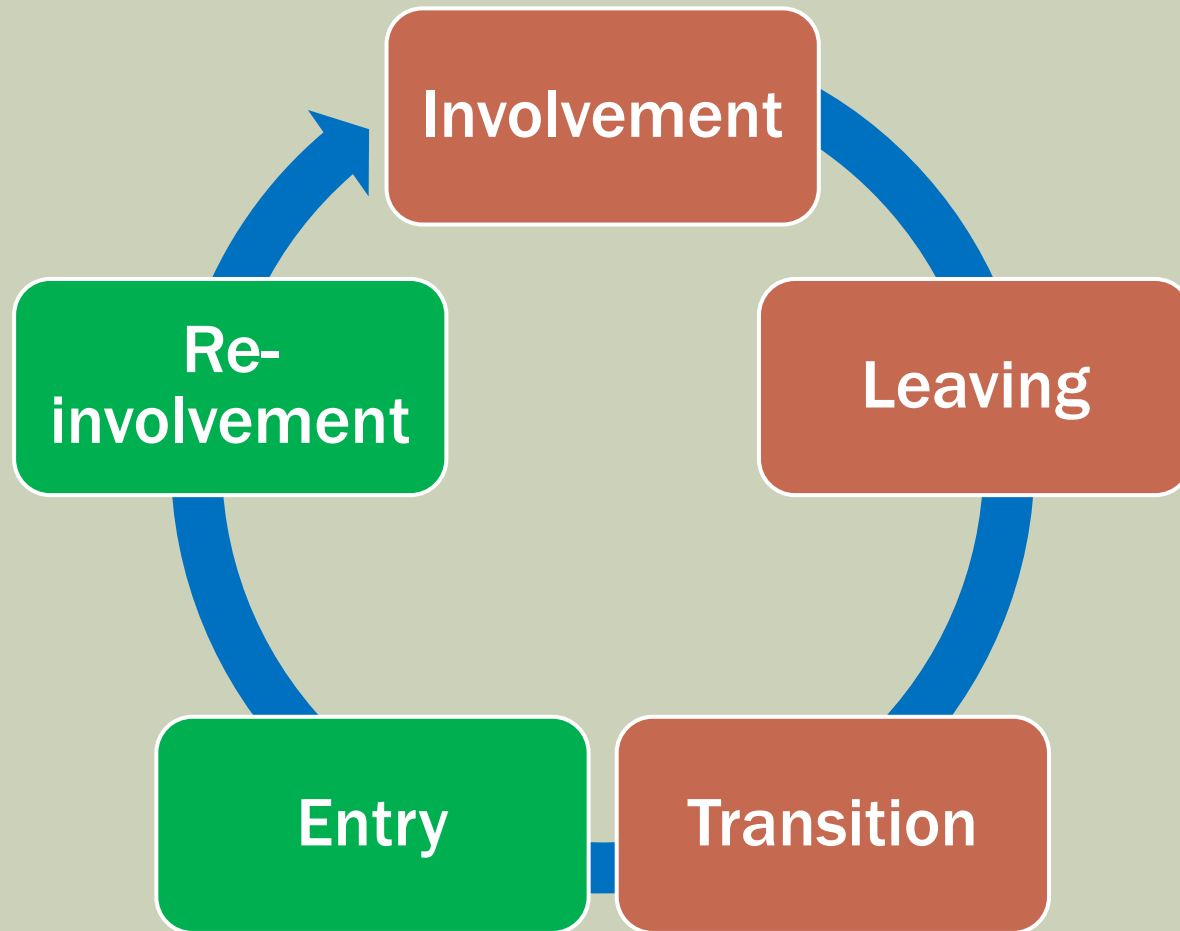
- What stages of transition MKs/TCKs go through while living in the third culture experience
- Why “developmental years” is significant part of definition
- How mobility and cross-cultural experience impact identity
- What we can do to help



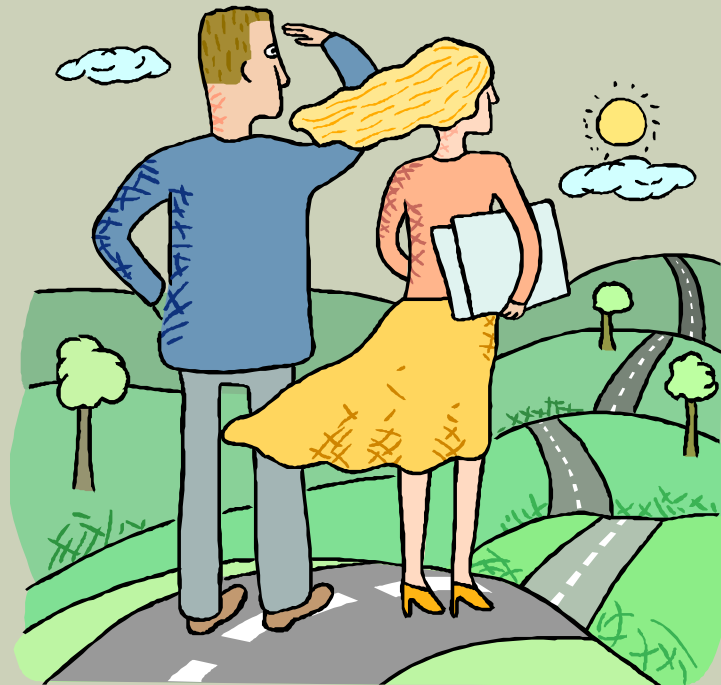
WHAT STAGES ARE EXPERIENCED WHILE LIVING IN THE THIRD CULTURE



THE ONES WE WILL CONCENTRATE ON FOR NOW



WHAT HAPPENS AS YOU BEGIN TO LET GO OF THE PAST AND MOVE INTO THE PRESENT AND FUTURE?



FOURTH STAGE - ENTRY

- **Our position**
 - We feel vulnerable
 - We feel ambivalent
 - We feel hopeful
 - We feel angry
 - We feel excited
 - We feel depressed
 - We're beginning to live in the present again



FOURTH STAGE - ENTRY

■ Community's position

- They feel tentative
- They may or may not begin to explore ways you can become involved in new community
 - Are their “lego’s full”?



EXTRA STRESSES FOR CROSS-CULTURAL ENTRY

(BY LISA AND LEIGHTON CHINN)

- Fun
- Flight
- Fight
- Fit



WHAT NEEDS FROM 'IMAGE OF GODness' ARE POTENTIALLY MET? WHICH ONES ARE POTENTIALLY CHALLENGED?

Entry Stage

- Relational
- Emotional
- Intellectual
- Creative
- Volitional



- Unified
- Valuable
- Spiritual
- Physical



WHAT YOU CAN DO

CRITICAL POINT WHEN ENTERING: FLIP SIDE OF THE RAFT – THE BYE/HI

- ▶ “Unpack your bags and plant your trees”
- ▶ Making choices even in the ‘non-choices’
- ▶ Say hello well
 - ▶ Accept invitations to meet others
 - ▶ Help kids explore new environment
 - ▶ Find good mentor
 - ▶ Invite others over
- ▶ Give yourself time



RE-INVOLVEMENT STAGE

(BTW, SOME NEVER GET HERE)

- Our position
 - We are known
 - We have status
 - We feel “part of”
 - We live in the present
- Community's position
 - They know us
 - They know what we can do
 - They include us
- What we can do
 - Enjoy!
 - Reach out to other newcomers
 - Serve as mentor



WHAT NEEDS FROM 'IMAGE OF GODness' ARE POTENTIALLY MET? WHICH ONES ARE POTENTIALLY CHALLENGED?

Re-Involvement Stage

- Relational
- Emotional
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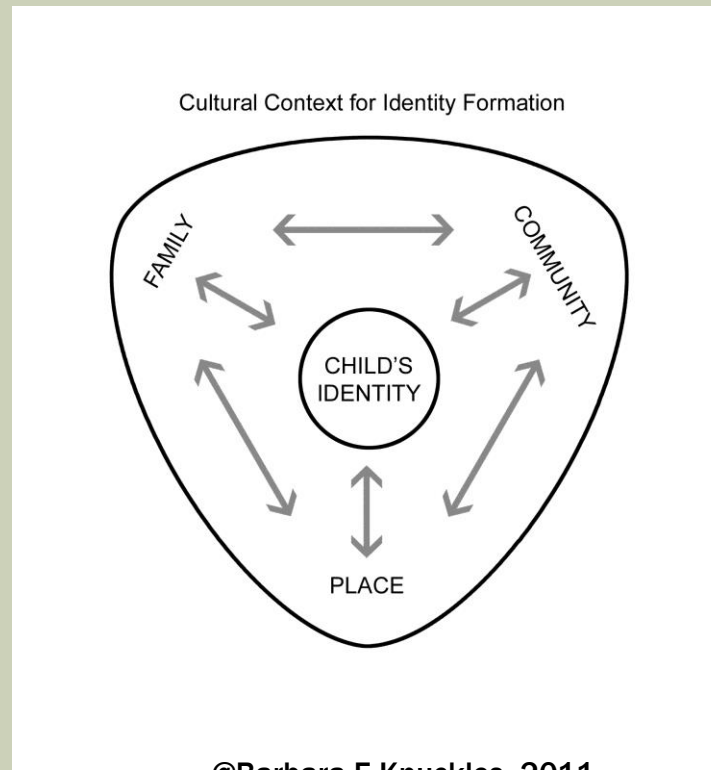


**But it's not
the same as before.**

What has changed?

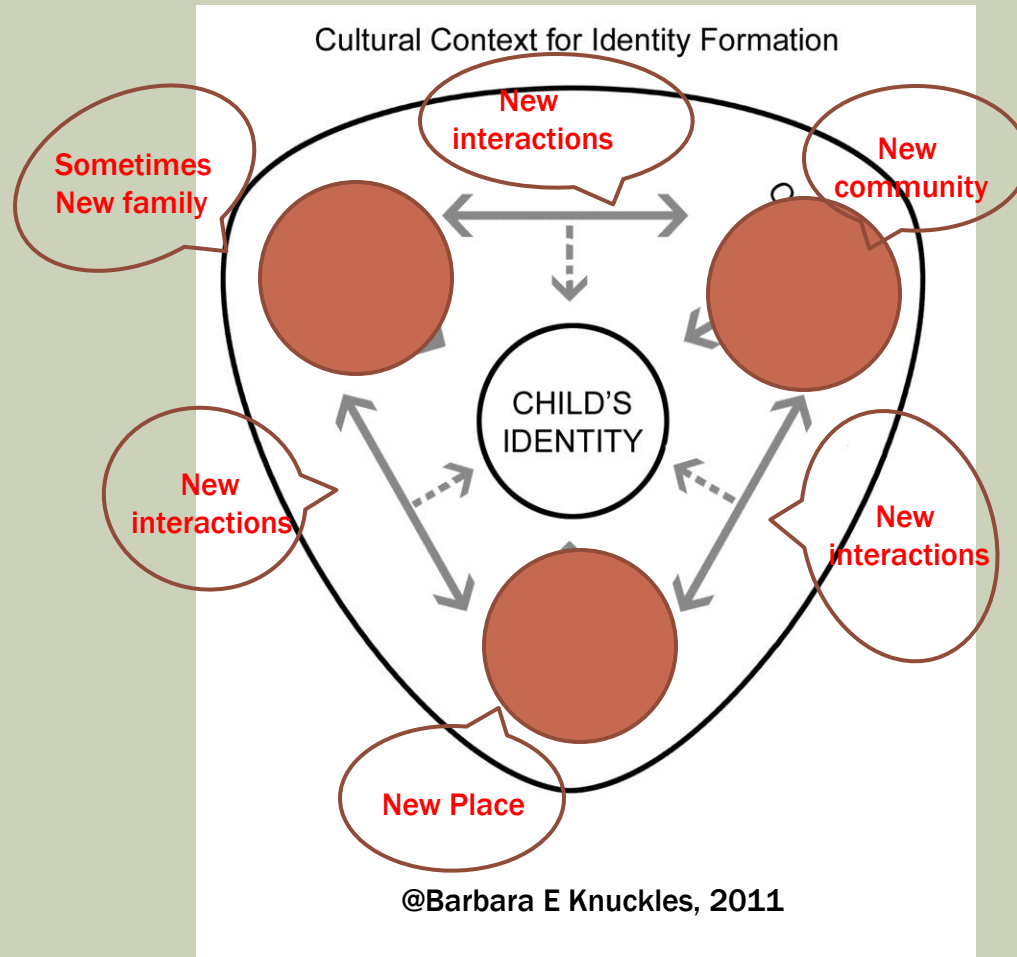
TRADITIONAL CHILDHOOD LIFE IN BASIC CULTURAL CONTEXT

Traditional Childhood – all stay steady



MK/TCK CHILDHOOD

WHAT MOBILITY/CHANGE DOES



why does
this matter?

Because these are
DEVELOPMENTAL YEARS!!

SECOND MAJOR CHALLENGE OF MK/TCK LIFESTYLE: IDENTITY

- Question of identity
 - “Which of my many selves am I?”
 - “I belong everywhere and nowhere...”
 - “Where is home?”



TO UNDERSTAND THE IDENTITY ISSUES...

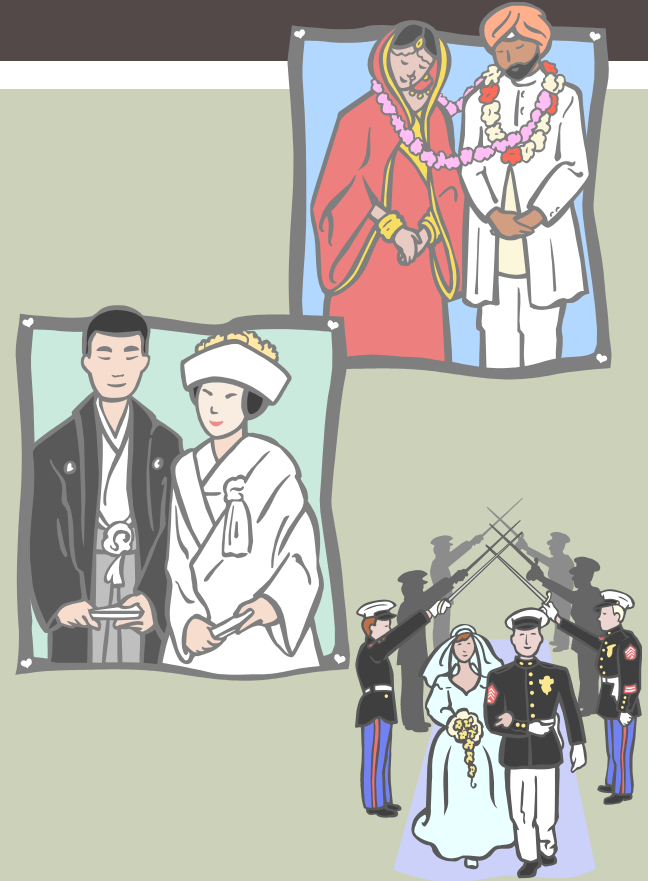


- ▶ What is the difference between a traditional monocultural upbringing and a cross-cultural upbringing?

WHAT IS CULTURE?

“Customary beliefs, social forms,
and material traits of a racial,
religious, or social group.”

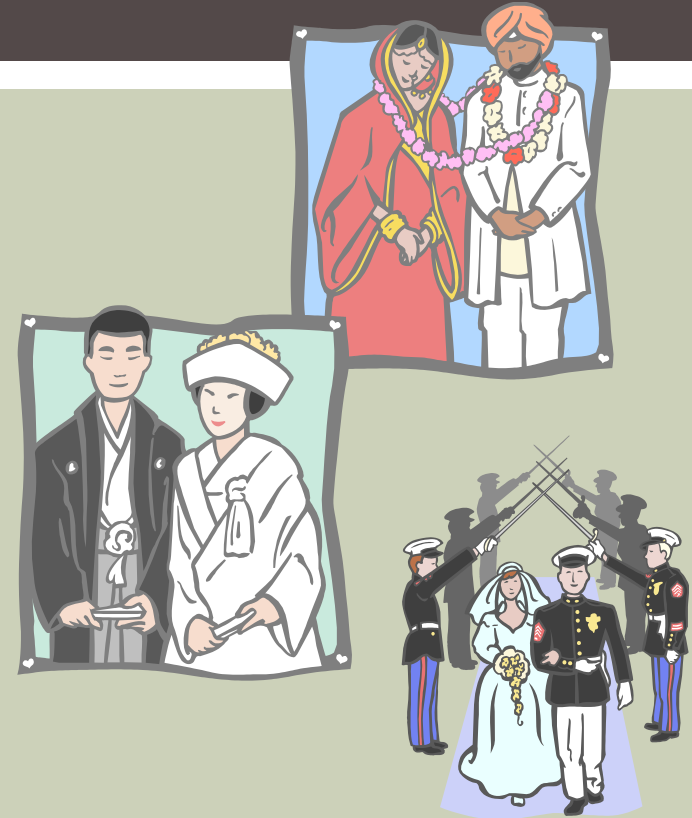
--Webster's Tenth Collegiate Dictionary\



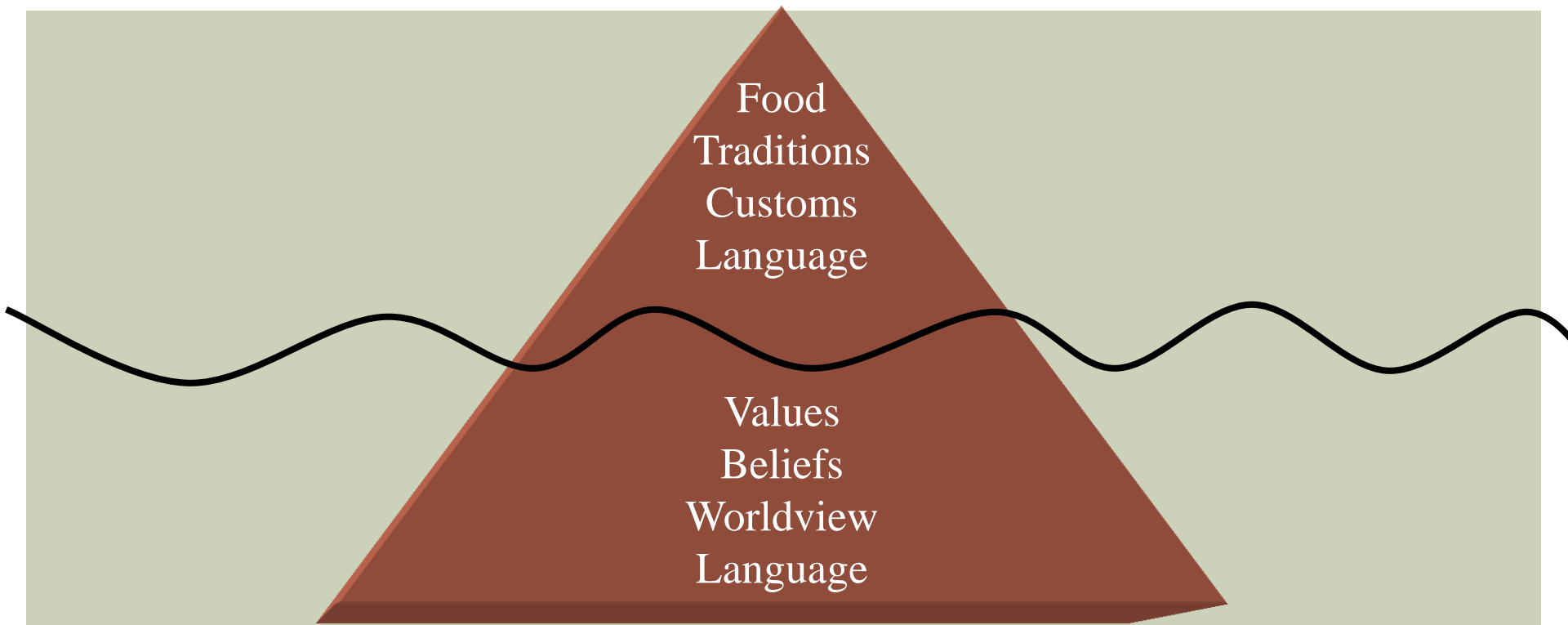
WHAT IS CULTURE?

“ . . . System of **shared** assumptions, beliefs and values. It is the *framework from which we interpret and make sense of life and the world around us.*”

--Paul Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 2d ed.



ROLE OF THE VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE ELEMENTS OF CULTURE



Dr. Gary Weaver's Cultural Iceberg

HOW DO WE LEARN CULTURE?

■ Cultural “mirrors”

- Parents
- Caregivers
- Teachers
- Members of the community
- Peers
- Media



HOW DO WE LEARN A SENSE OF CULTURAL BALANCE?

- Learn the rules as a child
- Test the rules as an adolescent
- Internalize and operate from them as an adult



WHAT DOES THIS PROCESS OF CULTURAL LEARNING DO FOR US?

- Gives a sense of . . .
 - Belonging
 - Identity
 - Confidence



WHAT DOES THIS PROCESS OF CULTURAL LEARNING DO FOR US?

■ Why?

- If you know the “rules,” you are seen as an “us,” not a “them”
- You know what to expect and how the “game” is played



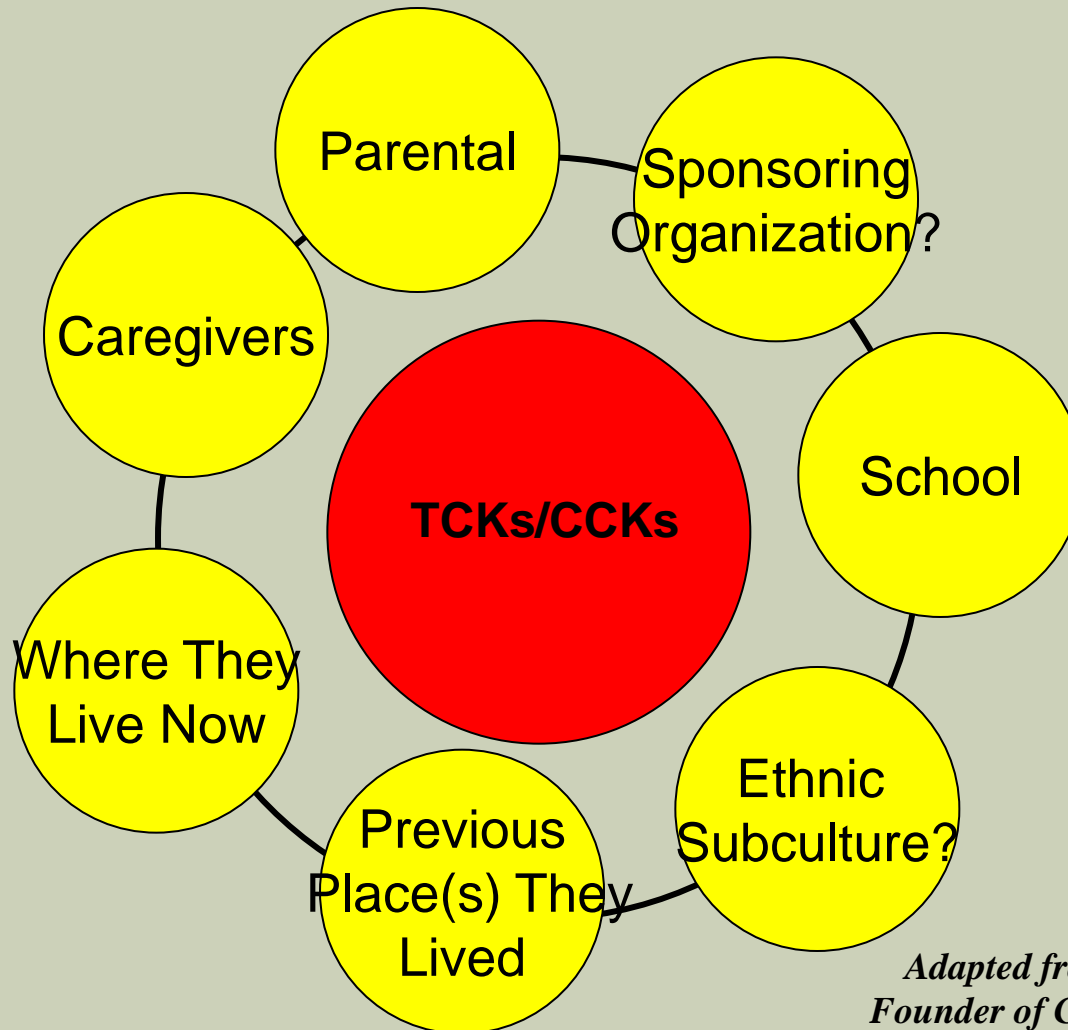
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE IN HOW TRADITIONAL MONOCULTURAL KIDS AND TCK/CCKS “LEARN CULTURE” AND THUS, IDENTITY?

- Not the process but the worlds in which their development takes/took place



**Home in Afghanistan
of Chinese Canadian mom,
White Canadian dad, children
attend multinational school**

POSSIBLE MULTIPLE SPHERES OF CULTURAL INFLUENCE IN AN MK/ TCK/CCK'S WORLD



*Adapted from chart by Norma McCaig,
Founder of Global Nomads International*

CHANGING “MIRROR” OF CCKS’ CULTURAL IDENTITY IN RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING DOMINANT CULTURE

Foreigner	Hidden Immigrant
Look Different Think Different	Look Alike Think Different
Adopted	Mirror
Look Different Think Alike	Look Alike Think Alike

PolVan Cultural Identity Model @1996

CHANGING “MIRROR” OF CCKS’ CULTURAL IDENTITY IN RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING DOMINANT CULTURE

Foreigner	Hidden Immigrant
Look Different Think Different Speak Different	Look Alike Think Different Speak Different/Alike
Adopted	Mirror
Look Different Think Alike Speak Alike	Look Alike Think Alike Speak Alike

PolVan Cultural Identity Model @1996

COMMON REACTIONS AS TCKS/CCKS TRY TO SORT OUT IDENTITY ISSUES...



- ▶ **“Chameleon”**—tries to find “same as” identity
- ▶ **“Screamer”**—tries to find “different from” identity
- ▶ **“Wallflower”**—tries to find “non-identity” (be invisible)

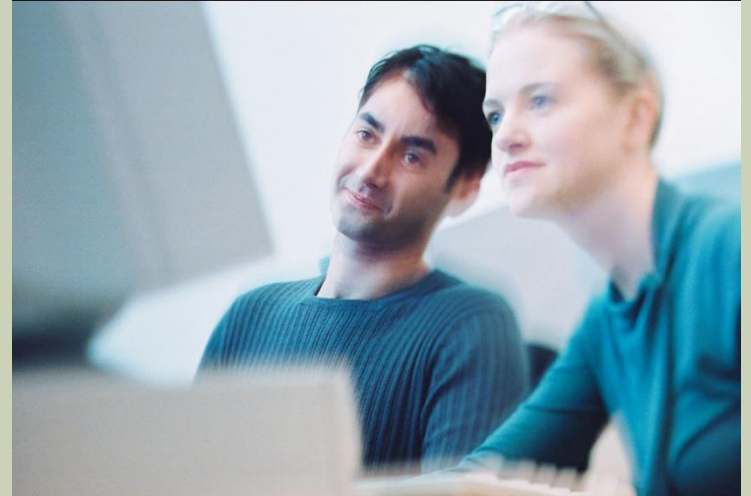
IN THE END, EVEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN IN THE SAME FAMILY MAY NOT NECESSARILY SHARE...

- A common sense of national identity
- A similar sense of “Where is home?”



OTHER FALLOUT ...

- In interpersonal relationships
 - Spouses/significant others
 - Peers at university or workplace
 - Teachers

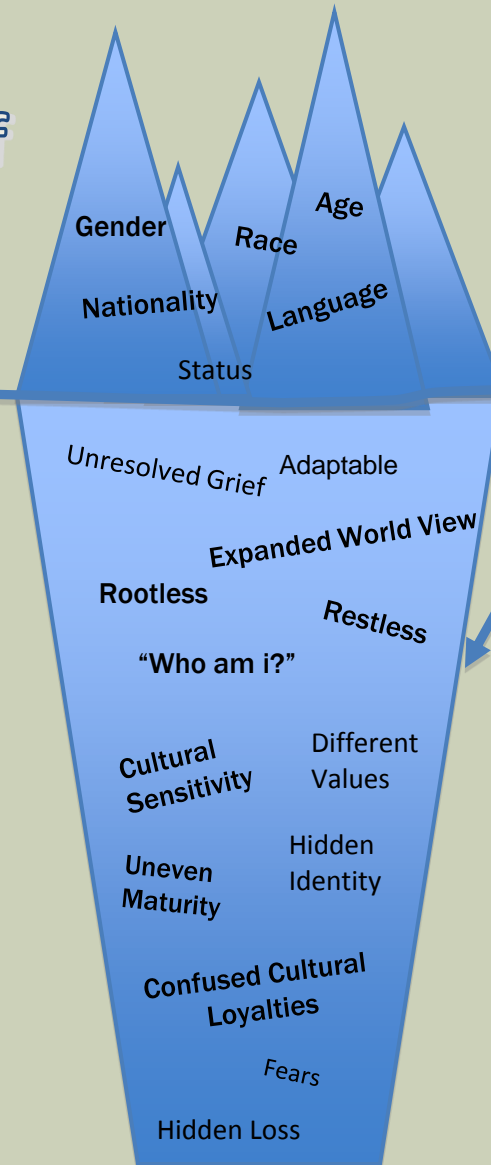


Common Characteristics of THIRD CULTURE

Common Characteristics of THIRD CULTURE KIDS

High Global Mobility

Expected Repatriation



"Neither/Nor" world

Cross-cultural Lifestyle

THIS LEADS TO...

- **Hidden Diversity**— a diversity of experience that shapes a person's life and world view but is not readily apparent on the outside, unlike the usual diversity markers such as race, ethnicity, nationality, etc

- *Ruth E. Van Reken and Paulette Bethel, CIES, 2003.*



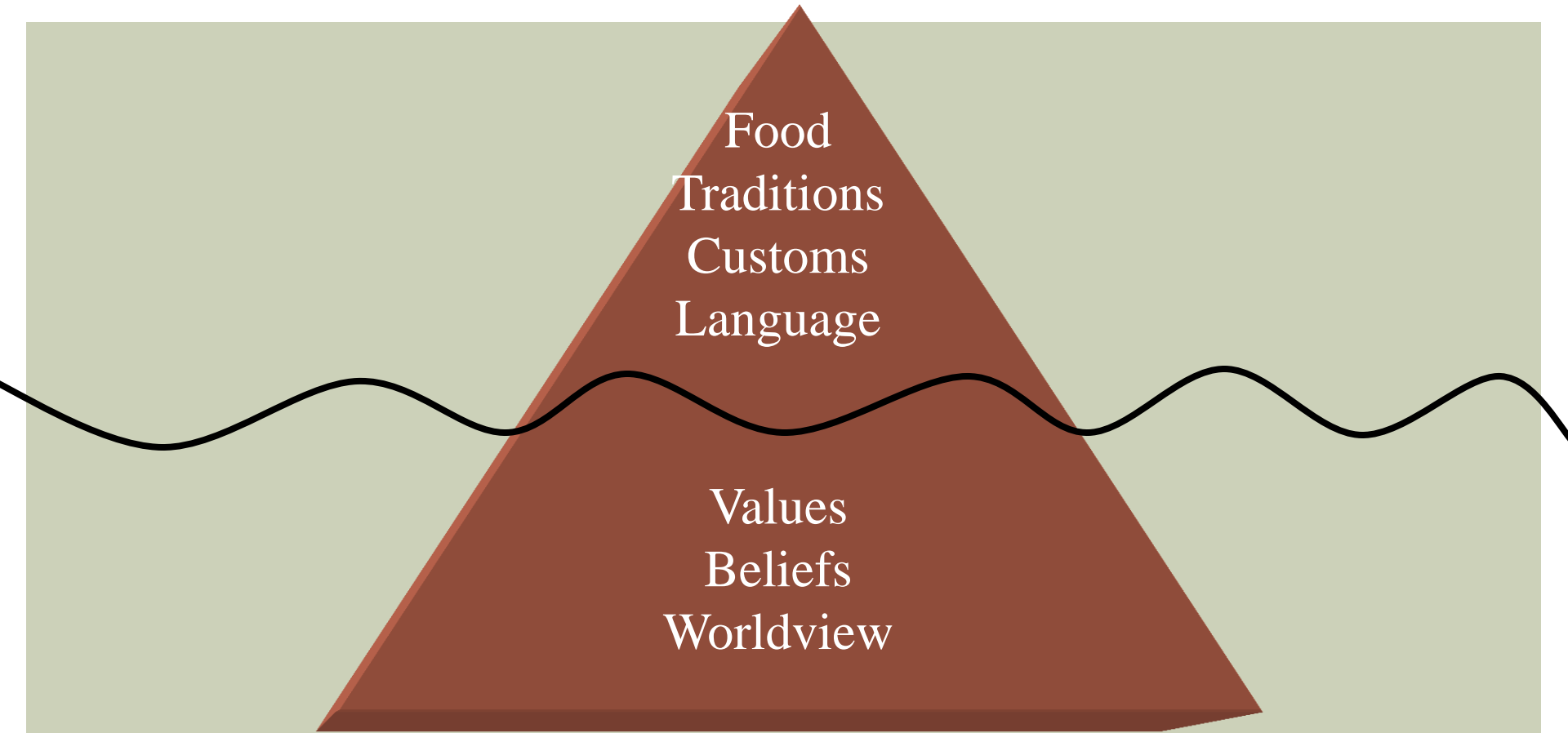
WHY THIS HAPPENS...

■ The traditional ways of defining diversity....

- Race
- Gender
- Socio-economic
- Ethnicity
- Nationality
- Sexual orientation

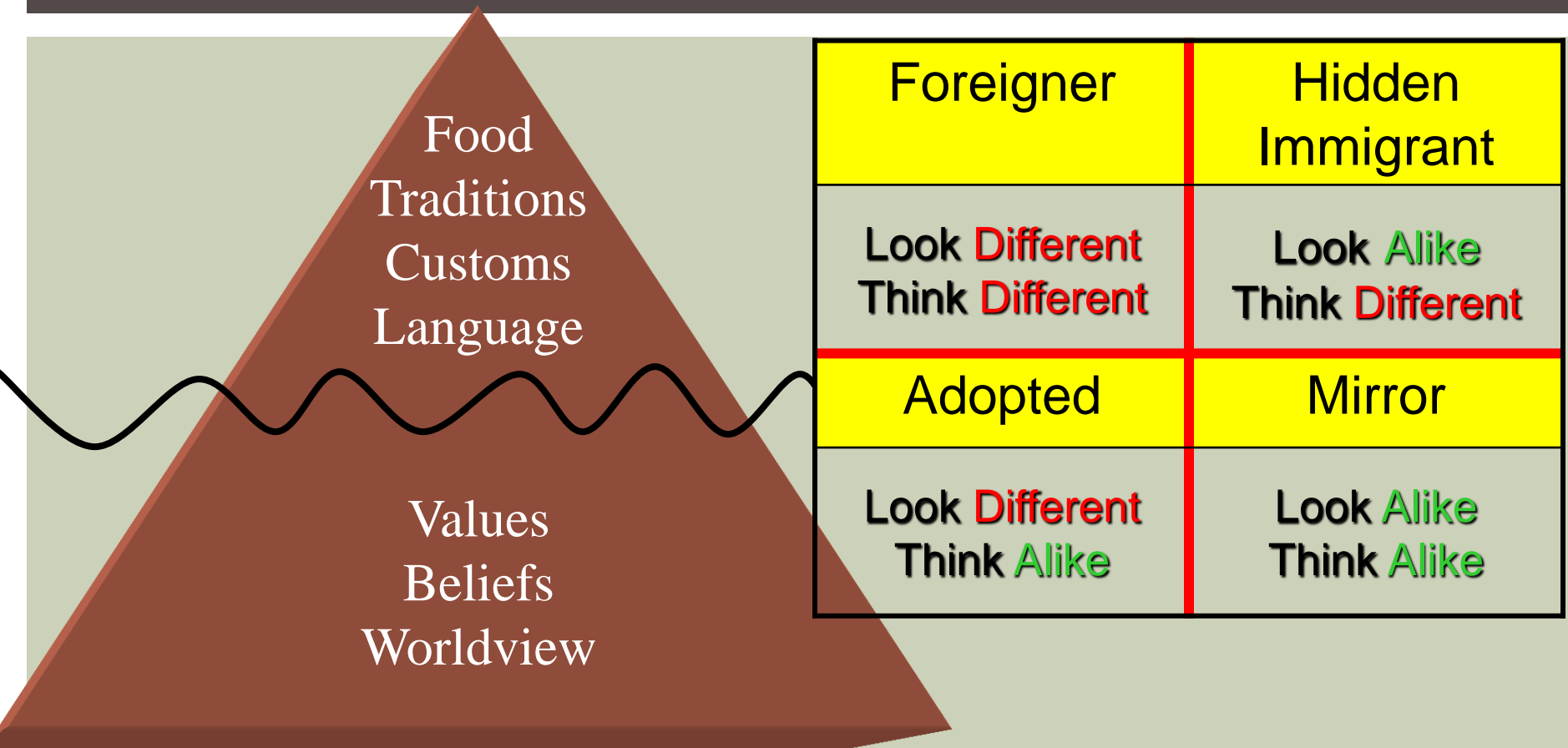


WHERE ARE THEY IN THE ICEBERG?



Dr. Gary Weaver's Cultural Iceberg

CULTURAL ICEBERG AND CULTURAL IDENTITY BOX



WHERE DOES COMMONALITY BEGIN?

CULTURAL ICEBERG EXPANDED

Food
Traditions
Customs
Language

Values
Beliefs
Worldview

Relational
Creative
Volitional
Physical

Emotional
Intellectual
Spiritual
Unified

Valuable

:

CULTURAL ICEBERG FLIPPED?

All persons are:

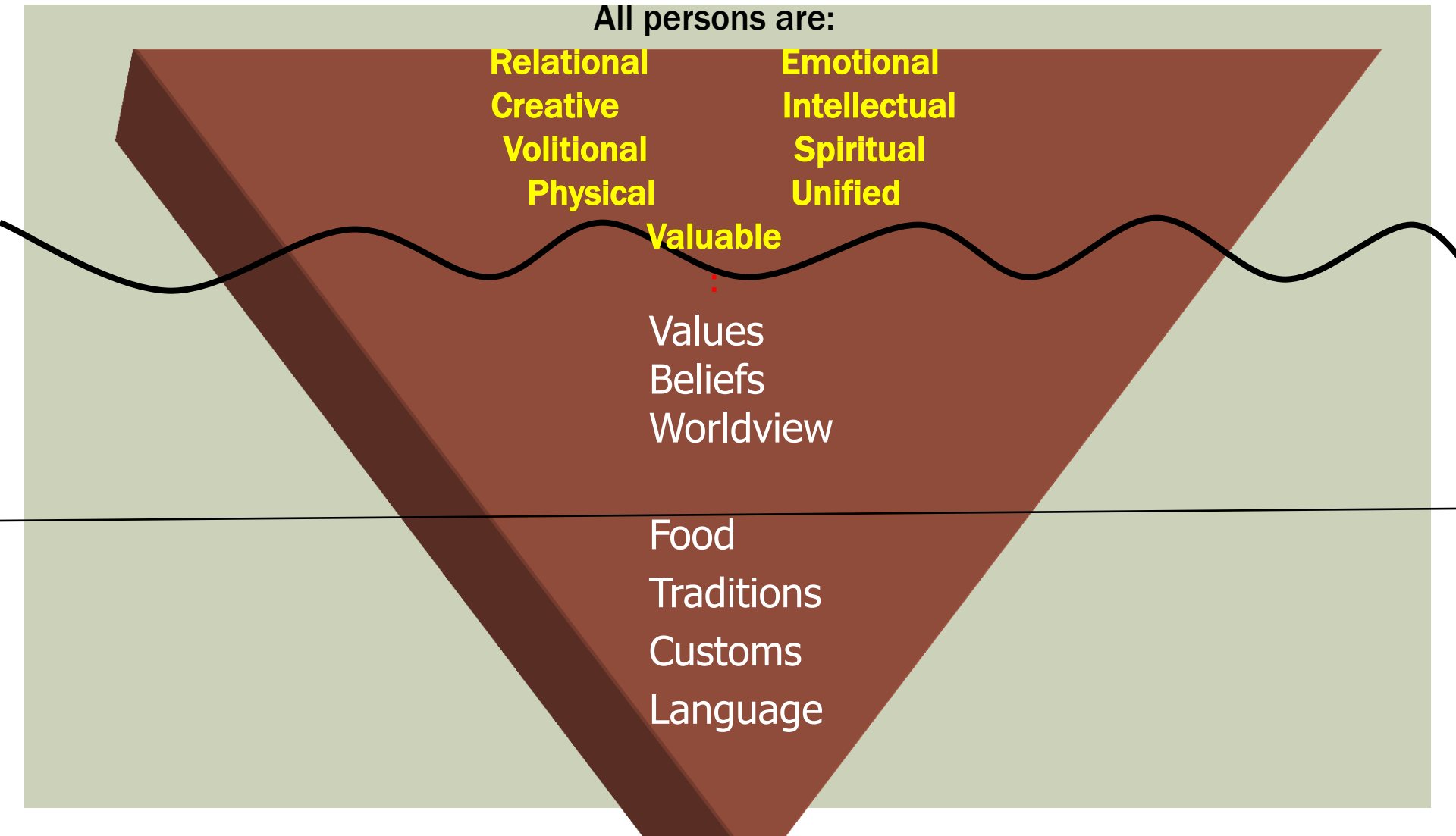
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Valuable

Values
Beliefs
Worldview

Food
Traditions
Customs
Language



WHAT DO WE DO?

- Normalize
 - “My life is like windows”
- Realize why family is so important...the potential constant
- Core values that are consistent no matter where



WHAT DO WE DO?

- Capitalize on developing the gifts inherent in this world
- Give permission to be the many



STAY CONNECTED TO ALL PARTS OF LIFE



- Find ways to keep in contact with the past while moving to the future
 - Journey of clarification
 - Internet
 - Skype

IDENTITY IN “PERSONHOOD”

HOW DID GOD MAKE YOU “YOU” ..ROM.12?

- Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that **the plan of God for you is good**, Don't cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance, but **try to have a sane estimate** of your capabilities by the light of the faith that God has given to you all.... Through the grace of God **we have different gifts**.

FINAL REMARKS...

- The good thing about being a person made in the image of God ...
 - “What is in your hand?”
 - “The rod of Moses became the rod of God.”
 - Ken Medema



OUR BOTTOM LINE IDENTITY

- **Ephesians 2:10**
- ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

