









Identity

- Personal identity is often viewed as referring to a sense of sameness or permanence whilst negotiating change and diversity (Ching, 1995)

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Identity

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.

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

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Identity

“We know that there is no one, right way to live, think or feel. We revel in differences, seeing them as potential opportunities for exploring and bridge-building, not for fear.”

Deborah Kartheiser (AW 2003)

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Identity

- Negative Identity
 - 'I am not'
 - MKs begin to be seen as 'them'
 - MKs are treated as 'them'
 - MKs struggle to know who they truly are

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Difference or Congruity?

Daring to be different
What's important to me?

Learning to belong
What do we share?

We have choices to make

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Identity

“My life is like Windows. I know all the screens are open in the background but I have to work in the one that's on the screen right now.”

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Identity

“I feel as though I’m wearing different masks and am constantly able to reinvent myself. But this also presents a dilemma: who am I really? Which of these is the true me? Where do I belong?”

Ndela Faye (17)
The Guardian ‘Millenials in Focus:
9 March 2016

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Identity

- ◆ Choosing Diversity

“You cannot define Who I am by knowing where I am from.”

“I am a combination of two cultures – I am neither and I am both.”

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TCKs – Where is ‘Home’?

- ◆ I don’t know
- ◆ It’s too difficult
- ◆ Heaven
- ◆ Wherever my parents are living

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TCKs – Where is ‘Home’?

- Roots are in Relationships
 - Primary responsibility of parents is to nourish their relationship
- What happens when that relationship is deficient?
- How do you give rootless TCKs a sense of belonging in a sea of change?
- Marriage a place to root?
- Victim or in control?

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Home

“We’re caught in a state of temporary. We are never fully here and never fully there. I’m starting to understand it’s not courage that compels me to travel so much, it’s *cowardice*. I find it easier to move to a new country and meet new people rather than return somewhere and face how a place that should feel like ‘home’ and the people I call friends have moved on without me.”

Natalie Jones: AC VOICE March 2016

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Home

- Choosing to put down roots

“ What it comes down to is this that I’m afraid to call this place home. Home means roots and if roots are cut off, a tree does not last very long.”

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Mobility

“I just got bored seeing the same face, shopping at the same supermarket, going to the same Post Office. I need that stimulus to experience fresh air and new neighbourhoods. It was almost like an addiction.”

Nora Kohri (AW 2004)

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Reasons for Mobility

- ♦ Learned behaviour
- ♦ Desire to experience the world
- ♦ Never feeling at home
- ♦ Enjoying adventure
- ♦ Visiting other TCKs
- ♦ Escaping the past

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Consequences of Mobility

- ♦ Failure to learn conflict-resolution skills
 - “With a built-in relational cycle, there is a temptation to simply leave a problem without resolving it”
- ♦ Reluctance to make lasting commitments
 - “With the importance of people rather than place, this baggage gets carried on to the new location and may re-emerge and impact the development of new relationships” (Eakin1999)

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Mobility

- ◆ Choosing to stay

“But now I know what I’ve really been travelling for, I see that I do indeed have a choice. This fall, instead of going abroad somewhere completely new with entirely new people, as is the norm, I plan to do the opposite: live somewhere I have travelled to before and have close friends. I want finally to try to build what a lifetime of being globally rootless has evaded me: a real *home*.”

Natalie Jones (AC Voice March 2016)

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Relationships

“Even as an adult, I was always mentally steeling myself for the next move. So I didn’t invest too deeply in relationships. After all, who knew if I would be around?”

“Real relationships are a lot of work and very messy! At least when you are sticking them out for the long haul.”

Deborah Kartheiser (AW 2004)

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Relationships

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Deborah Kartheiser (AW 2004)

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Levels of Friendship

Social literacy:

- ◆ Superficial level: small talk
- ◆ 'Still safe' level: exchange of no risk facts
- ◆ Judgemental level: giving opinions which friends might disagree with
- ◆ Emotional level: sharing feelings about ourselves and others
- ◆ Disclosure level: revealing our most private thoughts and feelings - intimacy

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Relationships

"TCKs frequently rush into relationships and share things at a deep level (because there isn't much time before the 'goodbye' comes). At the same time, we don't let our hearts really need them. We share but we don't risk needing. If you're going to break this negative cycle, you will have to begin by letting yourself need somebody"

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Relationships

- ◆ Choosing to commit

"The risk of a Goodbye creates a protective shell"

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Choice and Control

“As TCKs we frequently find ourselves in situations that are the result of someone else’s decision. So often other individuals have made the decision ... individuals we can’t even see. If you grew up in the military, it may have been the generals; if it was in the diplomatic corps, it was some person in an office somewhere. If it grew up in an international business like IBM (I have Been Moved) it was the CEO in some huge corner office. If your parents were Christians, it was one step higher – God.”

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Choice and Control

Authority figures in the TCK’s life:

- ♦ Parents
- ♦ Company
- ♦ School
- ♦ Church
- ♦ Dorm parents

Feeling the victim

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Choice and Control

“If I decided what I really want and start to go after it, something will happen to stop me. It’s no use planning my own future; I’ll just go with the flow of whatever happens.”

Deborah Kartheiser (AW 2004)

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Choice and Control

- ◆ Choosing to break free

“I no longer let fear control me – I know I can feel the fear and do it anyway’. I’m a lot less angry and have started giving people the benefit of the doubt. I’m getting better at saying no, instead of telling people what I think they want to hear. I now feel free and no longer will I let the abuse hold me back in my life. I learned how to be a victor and not a victim”

Survivor of abuse

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Trust

- ◆ You have a need, you express that need
- ◆ The need does not get fully met – the person is too busy or goes away
- ◆ You learn not to trust anyone
- ◆ You become good at meeting your own needs
- ◆ You only ever form superficial relationships

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Trust

- ◆ Choosing to trust

“To break the cycle you have to begin by letting yourself need someone”

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Loss

- ♦ Multiple Varied Losses
 - Personal
 - Social
 - Spiritual
- ♦ Mechanisms of Loss
 - Vicious cycles of loss
 - Concurrent Losses
- ♦ Loss of control

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TCK Losses

- Identity
- Relationships
- Place
- Community
- Status
- History

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Re-entry

- ◆ Depression
 - Irritability
 - Concentration
 - Appetite and sleeping
 - Tearfulness
 - Overwhelmed
- ◆ Confusion
- ◆ Spiritual Crisis

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Loss-oriented

- ◆ Grief work
- ◆ Intrusion
 - Continuing connection to loss
- ◆ Breaking bonds/ties
- ◆ Denial/avoidance of restoration changes
 - Clinging to the past
 - Failure to face up to the reality

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Restoration oriented

- ◆ Attending to life changes
 - Finance, practical tasks
 - Doing new things
- ◆ Distraction from grief
 - Staying away from home
 - Keeping away from things that remind you of the loss
- ◆ New roles/identities/relationships

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Processing the TCK experience

By –

- ◆ Permission to feel pain
- ◆ Permission to express feelings
- ◆ Pathways to say goodbye
- ◆ People to share experience

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Re-entry and Teens

Marion Knell
Family Cross-Cultural Consultant

EuroTCK
