

# Intercultural Communication

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

CUSTOMS

BEHAVIOR

ATTITUDE

Tracy Novinger

GENDER

LANGUAGE

BELIEFS

AGE

SPACE

TIME

TOPE

HISTORY



## INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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INTERCULTURAL  
COMMUNICATION  
*A Practical Guide*

BY TRACY NOVINGER



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TO THE MEMORY  
OF THE FREE SPIRIT OF

PHYLLIS ALICE GRIFFITH ELLSPERMAN

AND TO GLEN,  
*MI QUERIDO Y MI AMIGO.*

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## Preface

In our world of expanding technology and shrinking geography, people of different cultures have increasing frequency of contact and need for effective communication on a daily basis. Speaking a different language is an obvious obstacle to intercultural communication, but a greater and more difficult hurdle is to “speak” a different culture. Even though we may learn the words, the grammar, and the recognizable pronunciation of a language, we may still not know how to navigate around the greater obstacles to communication that are presented by cultural difference.

Communication specialists estimate that from two-thirds to three-fourths of our communication takes place nonverbally through behavior. All behavior is communication, and since we cannot *not* behave, we cannot *not* communicate. During all of the waking hours that we spend with other human beings we “speak” volumes through the behavior our culture has drilled into us.

Each of us is conditioned by our culture from birth. We learn when to speak up and when to keep quiet. We learn that some facial expressions meet with approval and others provoke a reprimand. We are taught which gestures are acceptable and which are not, and whether we can publicly unwrap a gift; we learn where to put our hands at a meal, whether or not we can make noise with our mouths when we eat, which table utensils to use or not use, and in what fashion we may use them. We learn how to address people in a manner approved by our culture, what tone of voice to employ, what posture is censored and what is praised, when and how to make eye

