Japanese as Multiculturals:
Charting One's Course With the Multicultural Compass
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Introduction

Before I get to the actual content of my lecture, I would just like to share with you a little of the personal background that I bring to this topic. Although I am from the United States, and I was born in California, the person who is standing in front of you is actually the result of seven lines of history. My family on both sides has been migrating for five generations. So, I guess it was natural that I continued the migrations and migrated to Japan.

My maternal grandmother, the mother of my mother, was Irish, while my mother's father was French-Canadian. On my father's side, his mother's family comes from the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea. His mother's father was a Manx Gael. His father's family came from Wales and mixed with Danes and Swiss and arrived in the American South sometime in the middle of the 18th century. Eventually, that branch, that Welsh branch of the family, moved West and intermarried with Cherokee Indians who were also moving West.

Luckily or unluckily, everybody in the family told stories, and that is how I have all this information. And luckily or unluckily, it was important to the members of the family that I remember the stories. The only problem was that between the seven lines of the history, the stories were not always compatible.

My family is both Protestant and Catholic. So going to church on Sunday, no matter which way I chose, I automatically made half the family angry. Within the history of the United States, I had family on both sides, on the side of the North and on the side of the South, in the Civil War. In terms of what is referred to in American history as the Westward Movement, I have both "white people" and Indians in my family. And there are immigrants, recent immigrants, as well as people from Europe who have been in the country almost since the beginning of the United States, and of course, the Indian branch of the family which has been in residence since long before the Europeans came.

When people ask me, "Why did you choose to study intercultural communication?" I usually answer, "Because I am trying to figure out my life!" And another way I explain this interest is to say, "I have a dream that I will be able to have a big dinner table around which my whole family could gather, and at that dinner table everyone would feel comfortable."

Some of the ideas I am going to share with you today, I developed in association with my co-author, H. Ned Seelye. We share one line of history in common. His great grandfather came to work in the coal mines of Pennsylvania from Wales, from the same region one of my ancestors came from. But Ned was a very rebellious teenager and did not like small town Pennsylvania very much. He wanted to have adventures in the world. At the age of fifteen he quit high school and hitchhiked to Mexico. He spent the next twenty years of his life mostly in Latin America. Eventually, he graduated from the University of the Americas in Mexico.

Ideas & Social Contexts

The reason why I am telling you these details is because I think it is important to understand ideas in relation to the social contexts in which they emerge. It is just as Professor Kume said a few minutes ago at the beginning of this meeting. The foundation of the intercultural field basically grew out of the post World War II world. It was particularly affected by certain issues that were current in US society at that time, the rights of African-Americans, the fact that the US had emerged from the War as a super power and had to understand other people better. In addition, the post-War management of the *Nichi-Bei* relationship has contributed a huge portion of the data base on which we base our conceptualization of intercultural relations.

Thus, this field itself grew out of a particular social context at a particular time in history. So, I would encourage you, as you listen to ideas today, that you listen critically. I never think that any idea is ever in its final form. Somehow ideas are always emerging. That is one reason I do not mind people recording my lectures, because ideas should be "out there" so that they can grow and develop.

One exciting opportunity here in East Asia at the beginning of the 21st century is to finally take care of all the issues leftover over from the Second World War. In resolving these long standing issues we will learn a lot in the intercultural field. At the moment we know almost nothing about inter-Asian interactions in terms of studies of intercultural communication and relations.

The intercultural field is only about twenty-seven years old. Its official academic beginning was in 1975 with the birth of the Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research (SIETAR). As academic fields go, it is an infant. It is my anticipation that as we carefully study intercultural interactions in Asia, around the Pacific Basin, in Latin American and between African communities, that our fundamental understanding of what is involved in this intercultural project will be transformed, not just one time, but time and time again. Up until now the descriptive data base upon which our conceptualizations are based is still really small and very US-centric.

Listening Critically

Therefore, as you listen to ideas today, test them against your own experience. I imagine in this big audience that we have many different kinds of experiences. So as you listen, see what is helpful in terms of your own experience.

Do the ideas enable you to frame your own experience in such a way that you are able to understand something you did not understand clearly before? Or maybe some of the ideas just do not seem to be accurate. Well, that is interesting. It does not damage my authority whatsoever. What I share with you is simply what I understand at this point in time. But being only one human being, I can not possibly understand everything. Your experiences are just as valid as my experiences. Perhaps during the question and answer period after I finish talking, maybe some brand new idea, some alternative perception or something to pay attention to will arise out of your reflection on your experience or out of our mutual interaction. Maybe we will make a joint discovery.

Being & Becoming Multicultural

Now, to begin our discussion. How is it that people become multicultural? That is, why do they find themselves participating in more than one cultural system?

One way is by birth, which is the way that I became multi-cultural. One is born into a family where the mother and father of the family have different cultural backgrounds. People born into such families have never lived in a world that has only one cultural story going in it. Their world, like my world, was multiple from birth. So, one way to become multicultural is by birth.

Another way to become multicultural is by experience.   You can move to a different region or country. Or culturally different others can move into your space.

In addition, even without population movements, our spaces are increasingly multicultural. The cultural "invasion" can occur virtually through the electronic flows of popular culture that circulate continuously around our networked world.

The Data Base for the Multicultural Compass: Literature Review & Personal Experience

The research base for the ideas associated with this conceptual tool which we came to call the Multicultural Compass is basically a review of the research literature on 20th century boundary crossers. Mr. Seelye and I reviewed the literature on travelers, on sojourners, and on sojourners of different kinds (students, business people, government officials, the lives of so called Third Culture Kids and Global Nomads, etc.), as well as the literature on immigrants and refugees.

We also reviewed research on co-culture members, that is, people who belong to different cultures, but who live in the same society. I use the word, " co-culture," instead of minority because when we use the word minority, it is not really very descriptive. For instance, in some multicultural societies the minority is actually the dominant group, as

was the case in South Africa under apartheid, or as was the case in the Southern part of my own country. Thus, I prefer to use the general term, "co-culture," rather than majority-minority discourse.

In addition to the literature review, the experiences Mr. Seelye and I had had in our own lives and the experiences of other people in our wider social networks also contributed to the data base. Mr. Seelye was the first Director of Bilingual Education for the State of Illinois. He was one of the pioneers who helped create bilingual programs in the United States. Those of you in Rikkyo University who are engaged in the creation of this new graduate school probably understand how difficult institutional change and development is, so you can appreciate what Mr. Seelye accomplished. Starting from a budget of zero in 1970, by 1976 he was running a 17 million dollar bilingual program that delivered education in 32 different languages.

Practical Theory: The Multicultural Compass

Mr. Seelye and I always had a kind of dual focus. We liked investigating things that were theoretically interesting but which also had substantial practical applications.
The practical focus for this particular research was the creation of a conceptual tool for children and young people who have to navigate complex multicultural space. This conceptual tool that we are presently calling the Multicultural Compass is a decision making tool for deciding how to behave when you have to choose between culturally marked behaviors.

What do I mean by a culturally marked behavior? The behavior can be something relatively trivial like whether you eat your dinner with *ohashi*, with a knife and fork or with your hands. Or the behavior can connote not so trivial issues. The behavior can have to do with fundamental values. For instance, in my family, one culturally marked behavior was whether I went to a Protestant or to a Catholic church on Sunday.

Just to make things even a little bit more complicated, sometimes our expression of fundamental values is carried out in rather trivial behaviors. For instance, right now, with the global Islamic fundamentalist crises going on, there is a big problem for Arab-American women in the United States. Should they go out with their hair covered like their tradition dictates, or should they leave their head scarves at home so they cannot be identified as Moslem out on the street? Should they express their tradition publicly? Or should they take "the easy way out" and blend with their current environment so as not to be discriminated against in public space? But by so doing, by going out in public without their head scarves, according to their own tradition it is the functional equivalent of going out in public nude.

This adaptation or coping process usually has to do with balancing two things. One, how much do I maintain my identity, my existing identity?   And two, how much do I interact with others? This has to do with how much I assert myself and require others to accommodate me and with how much I am willing to accommodate to others. If I

accommodate to others in all dimensions of my life, then eventually I will have assimilated completely to the other side. Culturally, in any case, I will no longer be who I was. I will have converted.

So there are actually three choices. Do I adapt to others? Do they adapt to me? Or do we mutually construct some other kind of social space that is mutually agreeable to both or all of us?

The Fundamental Elements of the Multicultural Compass

[Figure 1: The Multicultural Compass]

This Multicultural Compass, this conceptual decision making tool, has four main elements.

The "I":
The first element in the system is the "I," the self, the ego, the one-of-a-human-kind which is in the center of the system.

You have to remember my focus is always this person. Think of a little kid in a classroom of students in Los Angeles, my home town. Sometimes in a single school, there will be children from a hundred different language backgrounds. So how do you teach those children? How do you create an educational space where those children will feel comfortable enough to learn? So I am always thinking of this very small, vulnerable little "I" there in the middle having to navigate/negotiate this immensely complex social space. This "I," however, has certain capacities, certain abilities, and certain talents. Certain things are easy for it, and certain other things are more difficult or more challenging for it to do.

The Directions:
When this "I," when this self, when this person has to choose between culturally marked behaviors, basically the self is surrounded by six options or Directions in which it can proceed. Once again, these options were identified from the extensive review of the twentieth century research literature on boundary crossers and out of Mr. Seelye's and my own experiences and field work. What we were looking for as we read and reflected on our own experience and that of others was what kind of decision the person was making at that moment. Six is not the total number of decisions you can make. Six is the number of types, classes or categories of decisions you can make when faced with having to choose between culturally marked behaviors. You, thus, have six choices. You have to choose between six options, each of which takes you in a different Direction.

The Social Context:
In addition, this "I," who is making these choices, is doing so in some kind of bigger Social Context. That Context has its own possibilities and constraints. So, the Context, as well as the person making the decision, both have their own possibilities and constraints. These may be simply different, complementary or contradictory.

Your Goals & Meanings:
Finally, it is very difficult to use this conceptual tool properly unless you know what your Goals and Meanings are. What are the goals of your life? What makes your life meaningful?

In essence, this system has four parts, **three "C's" & a "G**." It has the **capacities** of the "I," **choices** of Direction, social **contexts** and life **goals.**

The Six Directions

Now we will discuss what those six decision types are. The first choice, the first Direction you might take, is **Sticking with the Familiar.** This simply means adhering to your first culture's behavior or behaviors.

The second Direction is **Converting**. This means substituting another culture's behavior for your first culture's behavior. Substituting means giving up your first culture's behavior and exchanging a second or other culture's behavior for that first way of behaving.

The third possibility is **Adding Cultural Baggage**. The reason I use the word, "baggage," is because you can think of yourself as a moving through life with a "bag" of behaviors on your back. In the Sticking with the Familiar option, you do not add any behaviors to your metaphorical bag of behaviors. In the Converting option, you throw out your behaviors that you already had in your bag, and you replace them with new behaviors. In the Adding Baggage option, you do not throw anything away, you just keep adding new behaviors and use them appropriately in various social contexts. Your bag simply gets bigger and bigger and heavier and heavier! This is usually the option of choice for multicultural/multilingual people.

Another Direction is **Losing Luggage**. When you use this option, you subtract behaviors. You throw them away, but when you throw them away, you replace them with nothing. This is different from taking the Converting Direction where, when you throw away behaviors, you replace them with new behaviors. The Losing Luggage, subtractive Direction is a very tough pathway to follow. Usually it is "chosen" only under conditions of oppression. People use this option in order to survive.

The most powerful example of Losing Luggage that I happen to know about comes from the experience of Native American children. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the United States federal government felt that it had "to civilize" the Indians. The government wanted Indians to convert totally to mainstream society. So one means of enforcing that option on Native American people was basically to kidnap their children when they were five years old. The children were taken to so-called Indian boarding schools. These boarding schools were run rather like the army. When the children arrived, their Indian clothes were thrown away, their hair was cut. And as if that were not bad enough, the children were forbidden to speak their tribal languages, even to each other in the dormitory, at meals, or when they were playing games. They were forbidden to use their languages at all. If they did, they were physically punished.

Can you imagine yourself as a five year old child suddenly being taken away from your family, with everybody screaming and yelling and crying and then finding yourself hundreds, sometimes thousands, of miles from home in this institution that was like being in a military training camp and being forbidden to speak your own language? In your

imagination maybe you can begin to feel what it must have been like to be one of those children.

For those children, there was a period of time when they had no functional language that they could use. As we all know, it takes at least five years of very hard work to become a fluent speaker of another language. Also, there was no relationship between English and the tribal languages. We all know what trouble English speakers have learning Japanese and Japanese speakers have learning English simply because English and Japanese belong to two totally different linguistic families. Well, the same was true for tribal languages and English. Tribal languages have nothing to do with Indo-European languages. So, these children, totally against their wills, were forced to enter totally foreign linguistic territory.   For about five or six years, these children were, psycho-linguistically, without usable language. They had lost cultural/linguistic "luggage," and, for a time, had nothing to use in its place. This is a very tough option, a very tough Direction to be forced to take.

The next Direction is **Mixing This & That.** This is a much happier option. It is very frequently used, particularly in times of very rapid cultural change. Again, to use a linguistic example, every pidgin language in the world is the result of this kind of mixing. This mixing option is simply taking a piece of one culture's behavior and a piece of another culture's behavior and braiding them together in a new combination.

However, "mixing" is different from "adding." In adding, you acquire a new behavior and keep it separate. You keep it in its own compartment. You speak Japanese, and then you add English, Swahili and Chinese. However, in the "mixing" option, it is like speaking "Champon" or "Japlish."

Finally, the sixth Direction, **Flights of Fancy**, involves creating new behaviors. There are many philosophical discussions about creation and what is truly new. With between five and ten thousand existing cultures in the world (depending on what you consider a "culture" or a "subculture" to be), there are many varieties of ways of being human in the world. Thus, it is probably not very frequently that we human beings actually create new human behavior. However, it does happen. For instance, on a pan-human level, within the last five years, I would say that we have created whole realms of new behavior associated with the new IT technologies. Right now, you could do a whole intercultural study on behavior associated with *keitaidenwa*. What types of messages do we send via *keitai*? What color is the phone? What type? What are the semiotics of the little things hanging from everyone's phones? Is *keitai*-associated behavior the same in the United States, in France and in Japan? This is a whole new area of cultural production.

Thus, when a person is faced with choosing between culturally marked behaviors, or at least feeling that they have to manage this choice in some way, there are basically six options or Directions that one might take. Many people, when I present this fact, they say, "Well, that's pretty easy!"   But I can guarantee you, having once been a seven year old in the middle of having to make these choices myself, that it is not easy at all. At the moment I was making these choices, trying to decide which Direction to take, nobody

ever told me that there were just six choices. So, my hope is that the knowledge that there are just these six options might be helpful to children (or anyone) in the future who is faced with navigating multicultural space.

<u>Examples</u>

How Should I Dress?

Now I would like to make the choices a little bit more vivid. Imagine a woman from India. This progression of examples is somewhat based on a friend of mine whom I met when I was a student in Vienna. My friend was from Southern India, from Madras. I do not know how many of you are familiar with Indian women's clothing from that region. The blouse that is worn under the *sari* only comes to just below the bust. The area below the bust and above the waist is bare. The *sari* is then wrapped around the rest of the body.

If my friend decided to wear her *sari* all the time, when she was in India and when she was in Europe, when she was with her parents at home and when she was horseback riding, she would be **Sticking With The Familiar**.

If my friend decided to **Convert** and wear European style dress all the time, in Europe, in India, even when she was back home in her village, sitting in her grandmother's kitchen, then she would be using the conversion option in matters of dress.

If she decided to wear her *sari* sometimes and European dress other times, depending on the weather, depending on her mood, depending on the occasion, depending on what was comfortable, then she would be using the **Adding Baggage** option.

If, however, she gave up wearing her *sari* and did not replace it with any other kind of dress, if she, literally, went around naked, then she would be employing the **Losing Luggage** option as far as dress is concerned. This kind of trivial example demonstrates the toughness of this option.

Now, the next Direction, **Mixing This & That,** is the synthetic option. Vienna is much colder than Madras. The short blouse that is part of the Madras woman's clothing is not very practical when it is about 20 degrees below 0, and there is a lot of snow on the ground. So what my friend did was to combine a turtle neck sweater and then wrapped the *sari* around her body as usual. This is a **Mixing This & That** option. It is often used to meet the demands of new circumstances.

Finally, the **Flights of Fancy** option involves creating new behaviors. In this case, one would create a new concept for clothing the human body. Maybe out of my friend's traditional dress and out of her experience with Northern European clothing, some new way of covering the human body might occur to her. This is what fashion designers are trying to do all the time.

Directions Taken in Japan

Now I would like to give a few examples of the different Directions that come out of the Japanese experience. These experiences are a little more complicated than the example involving clothing that I have just given.

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I would say, after ten years of experience in Japan, that the system of human relationships in Japan has been remarkably durable for the last 500 years. Nakane Chie's famous analysis of Japan as a "vertical society" addresses one of the features of this system of human relationships. Everyday, in our dormitories at ICU *senpai-kohai* relationships play themselves out. Thus, one might say that as far as the underlying logic of human beings relating to one other is concerned, Japanese have chosen to **Stick With the Familiar**.

Now on the other hand, the surface features of Japanese society no longer look particularly "Japanese," or even "Asian." One might say that the surface of the society has **Converted** to the West. And one of the remarkable things about Japanese society in these areas where conversion has been chosen is, once it happens, the lightning speed at which it happens. Haru Reischauer , the former U.S. Ambassador to Japan's wife, wrote a book about her two grandfathers, *Memories of Silk & Straw*. One of her grandfathers was a silk merchant who was away from Japan for about two years in the early Meiji. When he left Japan, everybody still looked "Japanese," like characters from an *Edo Jidai* drama. But when her grandfather returned after only two years, all the elite men in Japanese society seemed to have converted to Western hairstyles and dress. Gone were topknots and swords. Western style suits, hats and hairstyles (for males) were in.

The **Adding Baggage** option seems to be a great favorite in Japanese society both traditionally and right now. Traditionally, one of the remarkable areas in which Japanese have chosen to go in the Direction of **Adding Baggage** is in the area of religion. I personally think that this more tolerant idea toward the existence of different religions is a Direction that more of the world's societies sorely need to take at this moment in history. This is perhaps a strength of Japanese society that should be investigated very deeply so that it can be exported to the monotheistic part of the world. (This is a private editorial comment.) Based upon my comments in the introduction, it is probably not too difficult to figure out why I am interested in the use of the **Adding Baggage** option in the area of religion. My attraction to this idea is profoundly related to the fact that in the family I grew up in members of two different branches of Christianity, Catholic and Protestant, were fighting each other about who had *the Truth*.

As for the **Losing Luggage** option, probably because of the rapid changes that Japanese society has undergone in the last 150 years, I think that there is a spiritual dimension to society that has been lost. I think this is a kind of crisis that society is dealing with now. Many Japanese young people seem to be struggling with the whole issue of what it means to be Japanese in the world today. Instead of saying they have several religions for different purposes, they more often state that they have no religion, no sense of a spiritual base.

You see the **Mixing This & That** option everywhere. In houses you have both *tatami* and western style rooms. As for food, I just love the world of what before I came to Japan I called "doughnuts." In Vienna, Berlin or New York City, doughnuts usually have jelly or cream in them. But here there is bean paste, curry … even salad! Then there is music,

especially so-called "world music." In fact, fashion, food and music are three areas of human behavior in which we find it very easy to mix culturally different elements together into totally new combinations that are very pleasing to us. If we could only transfer the ease with which we **Mix This & That** in fashion, food and music to other areas of our lives, maybe we would have richer multicultural lives that were also more fun!

For an example of **Flights of Fancy**, the creation Direction, think of fashion designer Issey Miyake and his famous Pleats collection of women's clothing.

The Eight Key Features of the Compass As A Decision-Making System

The following eight items describe certain features of the **Multicultural Compass** and its six **Directions** as a decision-making system. The Directions
1) must be given **equal consideration**,
2) are **not evolutionary**,
3) are **of unequal complexity** and
4) are **neutral**.
5) **There is no need to be consistent**.
6) **Appropriateness is the measure of effectiveness**.
7) **Voluntary choice is better**.
8) **All adaptation is reciprocal**.

Remember that the point of view for this decision-making system is the individual in the middle of the circle of options. It is the person making the decision about which culturally marked behavior to use in a particular circumstance.

1. **Equal consideration.** To use this decision-making system effectively, you should give each of the options equal consideration each time you make a decision. Even if you have chosen **Adding Baggage** one hundred times in the past, when you are at each new decision point, you should review the whole circle of options. You should look in each Direction, just to make sure that you are taking everything into consideration, that you are not choosing out of habit. You should be like a kind of *aikido* master, feeling yourself surrounded by the options, being simultaneously aware of them all, before deciding in which Direction to move.

2. **Not evolutionary.** When I say that the Directions are not evolutionary, by that I mean that they are not developmental in the sense that **Sticking with the Familiar** is not the child-like option, and **Flights of Fancy**, creating something new, is not necessarily the really adult, sophisticated option. These Directions are simply different choices. That is one reason that I display them in a circle not in a linear format.

3. **Of unequal complexity.** Implementing these options is, however, not of equal complexity. Some Directions are more complex to take than others. For instance, you may prefer one of the options to another. To use myself as an example, ten years

ago, when I came to Japan, I had hoped that after a dozen years in this country I would be delivering this lecture in Japanese. However, trying to learn Japanese with a full time, academic job, including ten to twenty senior thesis students every year, being president of an international association, dealing with the fact that I was in that stage of my life where I had responsibility for the care of my father, all of these factors has prevented me from becoming very fluent. If I had given up sleeping entirely, maybe I could have achieved this goal, but instead, although my preference was **addition, Adding Baggage**, the Direction I ended up taking was the **Mixing This & That** Direction, so now I speak "Japlish," but at least it communicates.

4. **Neutral.** Another important point about these options is that they are neutral. There are neither good options nor bad options. The results of choosing different Directions may be good or bad, but a particular option category itself is totally value neutral.

5. **No need to be consistent.** A fifth important fact about these options is that there is no need to be consistent in your choices across all areas of your life or over time. This means, for instance, that you may choose to **Stick With The Familiar** in order to maintain your religion. You may choose to **Convert**, to substitute one way of dressing for another.   In language, you may choose to go in the **Adding Baggage** Direction, to just keep on acquiring new languages to speak without giving up speaking any of the previous ones. For instance, I speak English, French and German, some Spanish and New Guinea Tok Pisin and now some Japanese. So, you can choose different Directions in different areas of your life, and you can change your choice of Direction over time.

6. **Appropriateness is the measure of effectiveness.** To know whether or not you have taken the right Direction requires that you understand what some of your goals are, what meaning you are trying to construct in your life (this is the topic of an entire presentation in itself).   An effective choice will be one that moves you, at least somewhat, in the Direction of your goals. It is an appropriate choice, if it can move you in the direction of your goals in the social context in which you have to do your choosing. The appropriateness of your choice of Direction and, therefore, its effectiveness, is a four way balance between the **three "C's" and the "G":** a) your **capacities** as an individual, b) the **choices** of Direction you have to choose from, c) the degree to which the social **context** you are in at the moment supports or works against you in your choice of Direction and d) your **goals**.

7. **Voluntary is better.** This seventh feature is very self-explanatory. You usually have more energy to implement what you chose to do from your own free will than if a choice is being forced on you or if you are being coerced to make a certain choice.

8. **All adaptation is reciprocal.** This simply means that to some degree as we adapt to others, others are having to adapt to us. Even when one country conquers another, there is example after example in history of the conquerors taking on many of the characteristics of the conquered. Eventually, some kind of cooperation has to be established. People cannot remain in a state of coercion all the time.

Cost-Benefit Analysis: The Pros & Cons of Taking Each Direction

Each of the Directions has merits and demerits. Briefly, they are as follows.

The **merits** of **Sticking With the Familiar** are just that, it is **familiar**, and it **maintains our own culture**. However, only Sticking With the Familiar, only adhering to our own culture, can lead to the **demerits** of **rigidity** and **isolation** because we refuse to adapt to others and to changing circumstances.

The **merits** of **Converting**, of substituting another culture's behavior for our own behavior, of possibly assimilating completely to the other culture, are that we **can blend in with the mainstream** and by so doing **access mainstream resources**. The **demerits** are that then we **have no uniqueness to offer society**, there is a **loss of overall diversity** and, thus, **fewer sources of innovation**. Conversion is also **often the result of oppression**.

As for the **Adding Cultural Baggage** Direction, the addition option, its **merits** are that it increases your **flexibility**, and you end up **feeling at home in many places**. **Demerits** include the fact that adding behaviors to your repertoire means **having to learn many new skills**, not the least of which is language. While learning, you may **appear foolish**. Conversely, because you have so many skills, others may regard you as constantly **"showing off"** and as more than a little **arrogant.** Your very flexibility may also make mono-cultural others think of you as **untrustworthy** because you change your behavior as you interact with people from various ethno-linguistic backgrounds and as you move from one socio-cultural context to another.

Even the subtraction option, **Losing Cultural Luggage**, has **merits**. It can enable one **to survive** physically. And, paradoxically, it can be a precursor for **creating new social space**. If you look at the influence of African American popular culture, not only in the United States, but all over the world, this is the result of a group of people being reduced almost to nothing, but out of that near nothingness came extraordinary creativity. So, there is some sort of dynamic relationship that we are still exploring between these two kinds of extremes. As I pointed out earlier, however, Losing Luggage is a tough Direction to have to take, and its **demerits** are **self-alienation**, **marginalization**, **shame**, **low self-esteem** and, sometimes, a kind of **psychological death.**

The **merits** of **Mixing This & That**, of braiding together strands from different cultures in order to make new behaviors are that it is **convenient**. All you have to do is access existing behaviors and make new combinations. Thus, this Direction is a much taken Direction in times of rapid social change. The **demerits** of this synthetic Direction, however, are that sometimes the combinations are **"weird."** They are often viewed as **"not pure"** or of **low status**.

Flights of Fancy, the creative Direction, has the great **merit** of **being able to meet the requirements of brand new circumstances**. Its **demerits** are that it is **risky** walking

where no one else has ever walked before. This Direction is **anxiety producing** because new things of any kind often cause **misunderstandings**.

Once again, considering the merits and demerits of setting off in each Direction of the Multicultural Compass, your choice should depend on the complex balance between the **three "C's" (capacities, choices, contexts) & the "G" (goals).** As you can see, one major **demerit** of the entire system is **decision-making fatigue.** This appears to be an occupational hazard of multicultural people as they decide which cultural "leg" to stand on at a particular moment.

The Power of Our Own Behavior

In fact, there is always a balance to be negotiated between maintaining one's identity and preferred behaviors and adapting to others. Socialization is becoming so complex these days that often a multicultural person, a complex "I," standing in the center of the Compass, will choose a Direction which will enable him or her to maintain his or her complex identity rather than "edit" themselves to fit into existing socio-cultural spaces. This act of refusing to be "edited" is one beginning of new cultural space. However, when we can mutually adapt to each other, with true reciprocity being one of our goals, then that is really the beginning of the creation of a truly mutual new social space, a space where we can all be ourselves together.

The Rule of Six

You now have the basics of the Multicultural Compass Decision-Making System for choosing between culturally marked behaviors. There is just one final comment. After we sorted all of this out and discovered that there were these six Directions or options, something from my Native American side emerged into consciousness. My colleague, Paula Underwood, of Oneida Indian background, once told me about something called the Rule of Six. According to this rule, if anything happens in the world and in order to keep your consciousness open to as yet unknown information, what you are supposed to do is to think up at least six different reasons for why it has happened.

In Native American tradition the number six is heavily associated with the directions associated with the Medicine Wheel, with north, south, east, west, up and down. And there is a seventh direction, the place where you are standing. Each direction signifies a different kind of energy. You can even think of each of the directions as honoring a certain kind of energy. The problem for us human beings is to keep all of this energy in proper balance.

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