

Informal Definitions of Culture

Culture can be defined in a multitude of ways, and often carries different meanings for each individual. When the expert panel was asked to define what the term “culture” meant to them, we received a very diverse set of answers, all with personal meaning and importance to the individual.

- ❖ There’s no right or wrong – just different
- ❖ Shared rituals, habits, customs, foods, trends, mannerisms, styles
- ❖ Shapes who you are; how you interact with people (world view); passed down; beliefs; attitudes; impacts: food style, life and much more . . .
- ❖ Who we are and what we’re about
- ❖ All of the forces who make/made and individual who they are
- ❖ The values, beliefs, lessons that mold us, shape us to be the individuals/communities we represent
- ❖ Characteristics and common history/experiences that bind groups together and sometimes define individuals
- ❖ Is how you live your life!
- ❖ It’s the coffee shop you visit everyday
- ❖ It’s the person you are at work
- ❖ It’s the food you eat
- ❖ It’s who you are!!
- ❖ Values; beliefs; attitudes
- ❖ Is understanding, appreciating different literature, music, arts, etc – different from your own.
- ❖ A group of people decides to live and govern their lives, setting up family systems, background, race, gender. That even though there are major groups, sub groups in each are very different. A culture might have differences within like who is the head of the house, how things are passed down. An example of this is all the different American Indian tribes--Who is the chief ruler or decision maker etc. We tend to group a culture together.
- ❖ Cultures are also a subset of groups, gifted, women, special needs. No special rules for any except be unto others as you want them to be unto you. And when either makes mistakes in misinterpreting something, talk about it and don’t get offended. Be able to laugh at yourself sometimes.