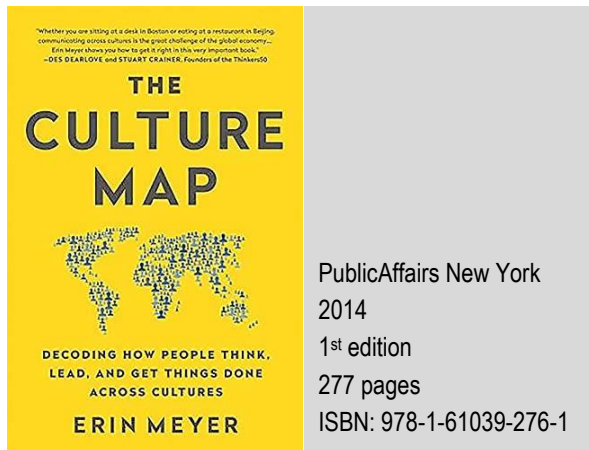


Book tip



Erin Meyer is a professor at INSEAD. Her research focuses on how internationally successful leaders navigate complexity in multicultural environments. Her work has appeared in the Harvard Business Review, the New York Times and on CNN.

Cultural differences based on 8 themes

Americans are extraverted and direct, while French people tend to express themselves diplomatically. These two cultural stereotypes may be true on average and can help us as "practicable prejudices" in everyday life to adjust to people from these cultural groups. In her easy-to-read and entertaining book, Erin Meyer describes how this attribution can prove to be a stumbling block in everyday professional life: A French manager is in trouble as an executive in the USA because she gives direct negative feedback to employees. The diplomatic French suddenly speak plainly when they criticise other people. The direct Americans, on the other hand, cushion negative feedback with all kinds of positive comments so that members of other cultures can no longer hear the criticism.

Using a scale, Erin Meyer classifies different cultures according to their characteristics in eight

different areas. These are, for example, consensual versus top-down decisions or confrontational behaviour in the case of dissenting opinions versus avoiding confrontation, etc.

One more complexity

As if we were not already challenged enough with our own cultural differences, we now have to deal with differences between cultures. But even this is not enough: the relativity of the same characteristics between similarly functioning cultures makes things even more difficult: while direct negative feedback from the French and the Dutch is not well received by people from India or Japan, for example, even the French are frozen by the even more direct feedbacks from the Dutch.

Not only for managers

The book is primarily aimed at managers who lead multicultural teams. However, the topic is interesting for all of us. We are constantly confronted with cultural differences in our professional and private lives. The book and, of course, especially dealing with other cultures in everyday life sensitises us to our personal characteristics. We often take them for granted and expect them from others. If we are aware of this, we can seek dialogue about personal impact and expectations.

The prerequisite for successfully dealing with differences, whether within one's own culture or between different cultures, is the awareness of one's own personality.

[#Coaching](#), [#Personality development](#), [#Strengths](#)

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