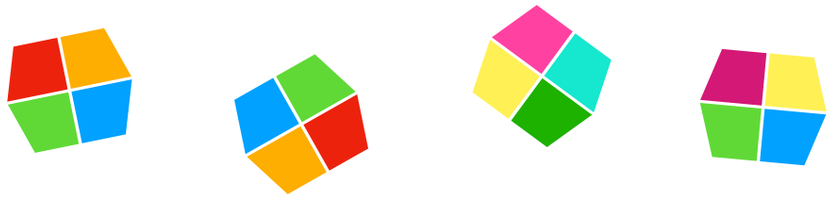
Seating

In order to maximize the value we get out of tonight's workshop:

1. Seat yourselves in small groups

2. Try to maximize the number of cultures at each table



Agenda

About the book

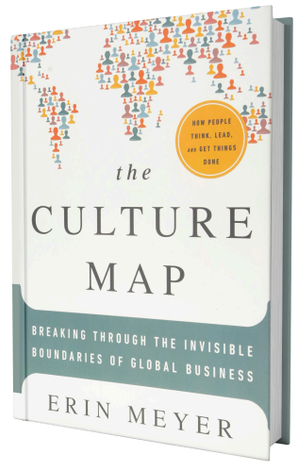
Introduce the 8-scale model

Work through 3 of the factors in our groups

↳ (Do more as time permits)

Final comments

Socializing! 🍻



Chad Kohalyk
コホリック・チャド

🦣 @chadkoh@indieweb.social
🦋 @chadkoh.com

Roger Guldbrandsen
グルブランセン・ロジャー

🌐 kinbiko.com
🐙🐱 github.com/kinbiko

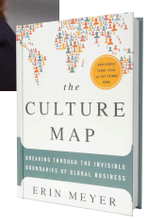
About the Author

American living in Paris, married to French and raising 2 children

Director of the **Leading Across Borders and Cultures** program at INSEAD

Focus on international executives

Research based on interviews of international executives from many different cultural backgrounds.



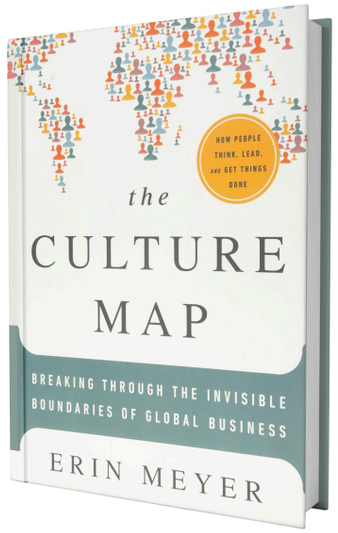
What this book teaches

Enhance your ability to decode how culture impacts **perceptions**, **cognitions**, and **actions**.

You need *both* appreciation for cultural differences and respect for individual differences.

Once I am aware of the cultural context of a situation, what steps can I take to be more effective in dealing with it?

Tons of detail and tips in the book!



Disclaimer: We need to be MINDFUL

As noted in the book, when talking about “cultural traits” we are entering dangerous territory.

This is NOT about perpetuating stereotypes. It is about asking: what is an acceptable range of activity within a culture? And recognizing the differences.

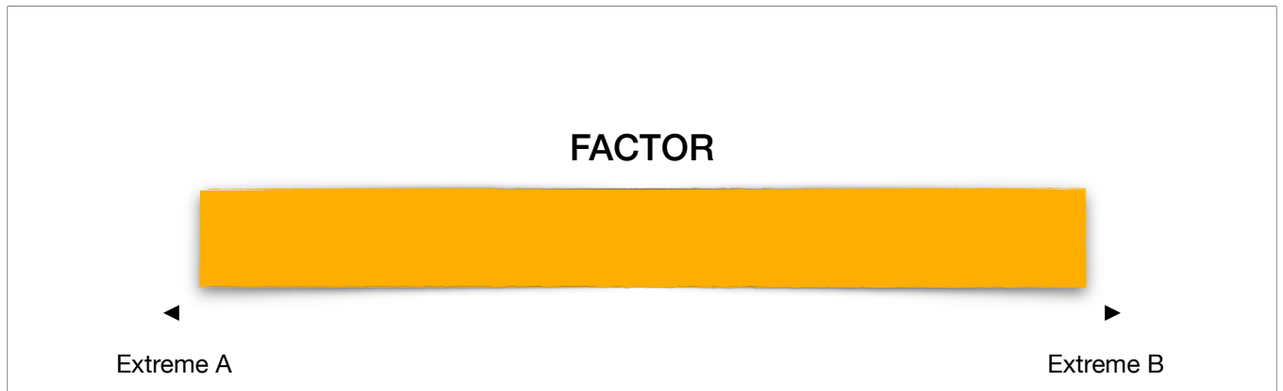
Also, NOT about judging. There is no RIGHT or WRONG. These are cultural systems, which work perfectly well for everyone *inside* the system. We are exploring how to navigate when communicating *between* different cultural systems.

This is NOT about putting people in boxes. It is to appreciate that people can be across a spectrum relative to you, and to one another, learning to recognize the interplay between personal and cultural traits, and *doing better*.

8-scale model

Low-context	COMMUNICATING	High-context
Direct Negative Feedback	EVALUATING	Indirect Negative Feedback
Egalitarian	LEADING	Hierarchical
Consensual	DECIDING	Top-down
Task-based	TRUSTING	Relationship-based
Confrontational	DISAGREEING	Avoids Confrontation
Linear-time	SCHEDULING	Flexible-time

- there are many kinds of specific patterns to work culture, think of 空気を読む or 報・連・相 or the “compliment sandwich”
- Meyers developed an abstraction with the intention that it work across all cultures in a business setting
- These are the 8



SITUATION: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit. Suspendisse ultricies tortor vel tortor. Aliquam eu mauris vel purus ullamcorper commodo. Donec semper ultricies sem. Sed ligula metus, tincidunt quis, fermentum sed, tempor in, pede.

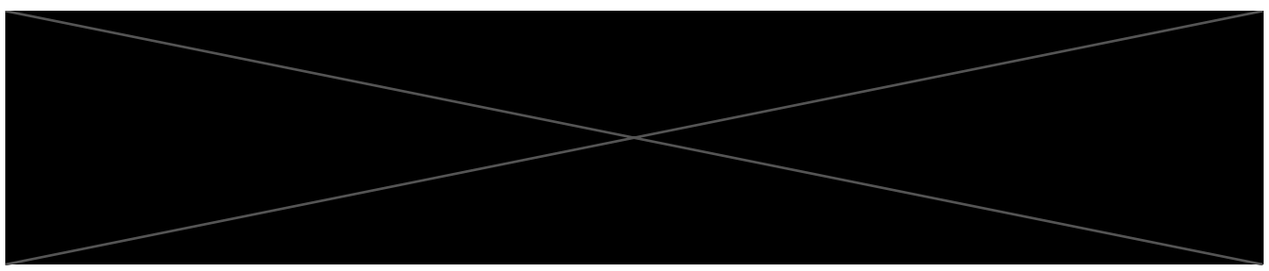
For tonight’s workshop we will work through some of these factors.

You are all in groups. I will present a factor, and explain the extremes.

Then I will give you a situation for you to discuss at your table. You will have about 5 mins or so to discuss the situation amongst yourselves. Use the paper we have put on your table to draw the arrow, and then try and position all the cultures at your table along the spectrum.

Then, I will PEEL BACK the orange strip to reveal what Erin Meyer’s research shows.

We will also take a little time to let people report back from their table,



READY?

FIGURE 1.1. **COMMUNICATING**

FIGURE 1.1. **COMMUNICATING**

Low-Context Good communication is precise, simple, and clear. Messages are expressed and understood at face falue. Repetition is appreciated if it helps clarify the communication.

FIGURE 1.1. COMMUNICATING

Low-Context Good communication is precise, simple, and clear. Messages are expressed and understood at face falue. Repetition is appreciated if it helps clarify the communication.

High-Context Good communication is sophisticated, nuanced, and layered. Messages are both spoken and read between the lines. Messages are often implied but not plainly expressed.

SITUATION

You are part of an international team working on a project. The team needs to communicate updates and progress regularly. Discuss how team members from different countries might share information—would they prefer detailed written reports or rely more on in-person meetings and context cues?

FIGURE 1.1. **COMMUNICATING**

Low-Context Good communication is precise, simple, and clear. Messages are expressed and understood at face falue. Repetition is appreciated if it helps clarify the communication.

High-Context Good communication is sophisticated, nuanced, and layered. Messages are both spoken and read between the lines. Messages are often implied but not plainly expressed.

FIGURE 1.1. COMMUNICATING

Low-Context Good communication is precise, simple, and clear. Messages are expressed and understood at face falue. Repetition is appreciated if it helps clarify the communication.

High-Context Good communication is sophisticated, nuanced, and layered. Messages are both spoken and read between the lines. Messages are often implied but not plainly expressed.

FIGURE 1.1. COMMUNICATING

Low-Context Good communication is precise, simple, and clear. Messages are expressed and understood at face falue. Repetition is appreciated if it helps clarify the communication.

High-Context Good communication is sophisticated, nuanced, and layered. Messages are both spoken and read between the lines. Messages are often implied but not plainly expressed.

Cultural Relativity

- these are not absolute numbers
- *On the scale, is a country X?* Well, that depends on your STARTING culture. It is X if your country is more to the Y, but will be Y if your country is extremely X

FIGURE 1.1. COMMUNICATING

Low-Context Good communication is precise, simple, and clear. Messages are expressed and understood at face falue. Repetition is appreciated if it helps clarify the communication.

High-Context Good communication is sophisticated, nuanced, and layered. Messages are both spoken and read between the lines. Messages are often implied but not plainly expressed.

FIGURE 8.1. **SCHEDULING**

FIGURE 8.1. SCHEDULING

Linear-time Project steps are approached in a sequential fashion, completing one task before beginning the next. One thing at a time. No interruptions. The focus is on the deadline and sticking to the schedule. Emphasis is on promptness and good organization over flexibility.

FIGURE 8.1. SCHEDULING

Linear-time Project steps are approached in a sequential fashion, completing one task before beginning the next. One thing at a time. No interruptions. The focus is on the deadline and sticking to the schedule. Emphasis is on promptness and good organization over flexibility.

Flexible-time Project steps are approached in a fluid manner, changing tasks as opportunities arise. Many things are dealt with at once and interruptions accepted. The focus is on adaptability, and flexibility is valued over organization.

SITUATION

Your team has a series of deadlines to meet for a project. Discuss how teams from different countries might manage their schedules and time. Would they adhere strictly to the timelines and schedules, or would they take a more flexible approach, adjusting plans as needed?

FIGURE 8.1. **SCHEDULING**

Linear-time Project steps are approached in a sequential fashion, completing one task before beginning the next. One thing at a time. No interruptions. The focus is on the deadline and sticking to the schedule. Emphasis is on promptness and good organization over flexibility.

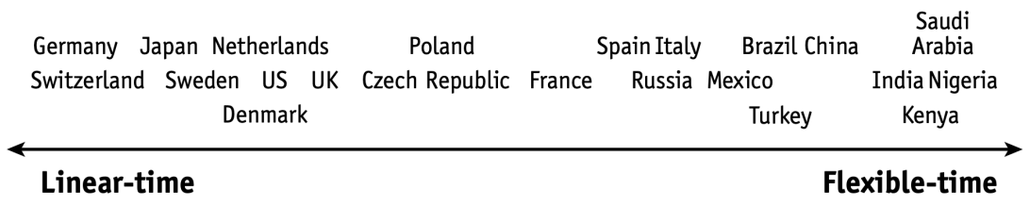
Flexible-time Project steps are approached in a fluid manner, changing tasks as opportunities arise. Many things are dealt with at once and interruptions accepted. The focus is on adaptability, and flexibility is valued over organization.

FIGURE 8.1. SCHEDULING

Linear-time Project steps are approached in a sequential fashion, completing one task before beginning the next. One thing at a time. No interruptions. The focus is on the deadline and sticking to the schedule. Emphasis is on promptness and good organization over flexibility.

Flexible-time Project steps are approached in a fluid manner, changing tasks as opportunities arise. Many things are dealt with at once and interruptions accepted. The focus is on adaptability, and flexibility is valued over organization.

FIGURE 8.1. SCHEDULING



Linear-time Project steps are approached in a sequential fashion, completing one task before beginning the next. One thing at a time. No interruptions. The focus is on the deadline and sticking to the schedule. Emphasis is on promptness and good organization over flexibility.

Flexible-time Project steps are approached in a fluid manner, changing tasks as opportunities arise. Many things are dealt with at once and interruptions accepted. The focus is on adaptability, and flexibility is valued over organization.

FIGURE 5.3. **DECIDING**

FIGURE 5.3. **DECIDING**

Consensual Decisions are made in groups through unanimous agreement.

FIGURE 5.3. DECIDING

Consensual Decisions are made in groups through unanimous agreement.

Top-down Decisions are made by individuals (usually the boss).

SITUATION

Your team is facing a tight deadline and needs to make a quick decision on how to proceed with a project. Discuss how teams from different countries might approach this decision. Would they aim to reach a consensus through group discussion, or would the leader make the decision unilaterally?

FIGURE 5.3. **DECIDING**

Consensual Decisions are made in groups through unanimous agreement.

Top-down Decisions are made by individuals (usually the boss).

FIGURE 5.3. DECIDING

Consensual Decisions are made in groups through unanimous agreement.

Top-down Decisions are made by individuals (usually the boss).

FIGURE 5.3. DECIDING

Consensual Decisions are made in groups through unanimous agreement.

Top-down Decisions are made by individuals (usually the boss).

INTERMISSION

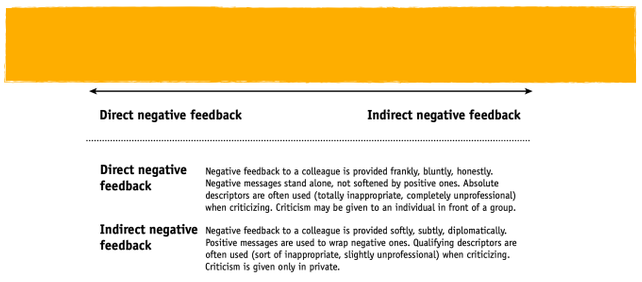
FIGURE 2.2. **EVALUATING**

Direct negative feedback	Negative feedback to a colleague is provided frankly, bluntly, honestly. Negative messages stand alone, not softened by positive ones. Absolute descriptors are often used (totally inappropriate, completely unprofessional) when criticizing. Criticism may be given to an individual in front of a group.
Indirect negative feedback	Negative feedback to a colleague is provided softly, subtly, diplomatically. Positive messages are used to wrap negative ones. Qualifying descriptors are often used (sort of inappropriate, slightly unprofessional) when criticizing. Criticism is given only in private.

SITUATION

You are in a performance review meeting. Your manager needs to provide constructive criticism about your work. Discuss how managers from different countries might deliver this feedback. Would they be straightforward and explicit, or would they use more diplomatic and subtle language to convey their points?

FIGURE 2.2. **EVALUATING**



Direct negative feedback	Negative feedback to a colleague is provided frankly, bluntly, honestly. Negative messages stand alone, not softened by positive ones. Absolute descriptors are often used (totally inappropriate, completely unprofessional) when criticizing. Criticism may be given to an individual in front of a group.
Indirect negative feedback	Negative feedback to a colleague is provided softly, subtly, diplomatically. Positive messages are used to wrap negative ones. Qualifying descriptors are often used (sort of inappropriate, slightly unprofessional) when criticizing. Criticism is given only in private.

FIGURE 2.2. EVALUATING

Direct negative feedback Negative feedback to a colleague is provided frankly, bluntly, honestly. Negative messages stand alone, not softened by positive ones. Absolute descriptors are often used (totally inappropriate, completely unprofessional) when criticizing. Criticism may be given to an individual in front of a group.

Indirect negative feedback Negative feedback to a colleague is provided softly, subtly, diplomatically. Positive messages are used to wrap negative ones. Qualifying descriptors are often used (sort of inappropriate, slightly unprofessional) when criticizing. Criticism is given only in private.

FIGURE 7.1. DISAGREEING

Confrontational	Disagreement and debate are positive for the team or organization. Open confrontation is appropriate and will not negatively impact the relationship.
Avoids confrontation	Disagreement and debate are negative for the team or organization. Open confrontation is inappropriate and will break group harmony or negatively impact the relationship.

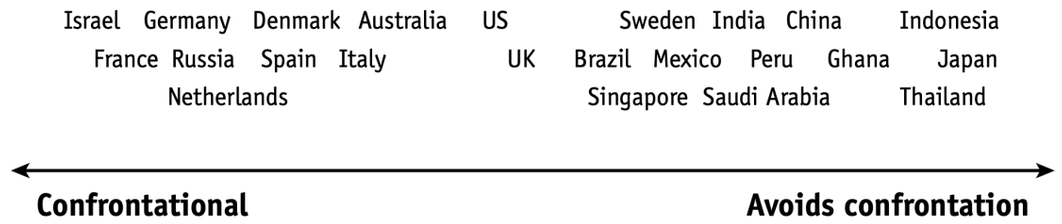
SITUATION

During a team meeting, there is a disagreement about the best approach to solve a problem. Discuss how team members from different countries might handle this disagreement. Would they openly discuss and debate their differing opinions, or would they avoid direct confrontation and seek a more harmonious resolution?

FIGURE 7.1. **DISAGREEING**

Confrontational	Disagreement and debate are positive for the team or organization. Open confrontation is appropriate and will not negatively impact the relationship.
Avoids confrontation	Disagreement and debate are negative for the team or organization. Open confrontation is inappropriate and will break group harmony or negatively impact the relationship.

FIGURE 7.1. DISAGREEING



Confrontational Disagreement and debate are positive for the team or organization. Open confrontation is appropriate and will not negatively impact the relationship.

Avoids confrontation Disagreement and debate are negative for the team or organization. Open confrontation is inappropriate and will break group harmony or negatively impact the relationship.

FIGURE 3.1. PERSUADING

Principles-first	Individuals are trained to begin with a fact, statement, or opinion and later add concepts to back up or explain the conclusion as necessary. The preference is to begin a message or report with an executive summary or bullet points. Discussions are approached in a practical, concrete manner. Theoretical or philosophical discussions are avoided in a business environment.
Applications-first	Individuals have been trained to first develop the theory or complex concept before presenting a fact, statement, or opinion. The preference is to begin a message or report by building up a theoretical argument before moving on to a conclusion. The conceptual principles underlying each situation are valued.

SITUATION

Your team is pitching a new idea to upper management. Discuss how teams from different countries might structure their presentation. Would they start with the theoretical principles and concepts first or jump straight into practical examples and applications?

FIGURE 3.1. **PERSUADING**

Principles-first ..... **Applications-first**

Principles-first	Individuals are trained to begin with a fact, statement, or opinion and later add concepts to back up or explain the conclusion as necessary. The preference is to begin a message or report with an executive summary or bullet points. Discussions are approached in a practical, concrete manner. Theoretical or philosophical discussions are avoided in a business environment.
Applications-first	Individuals have been trained to first develop the theory or complex concept before presenting a fact, statement, or opinion. The preference is to begin a message or report by building up a theoretical argument before moving on to a conclusion. The conceptual principles underlying each situation are valued.

FIGURE 3.1. PERSUADING

Principles-first Individuals are trained to begin with a fact, statement, or opinion and later add concepts to back up or explain the conclusion as necessary. The preference is to begin a message or report with an executive summary or bullet points. Discussions are approached in a practical, concrete manner. Theoretical or philosophical discussions are avoided in a business environment.

Applications-first Individuals have been trained to first develop the theory or complex concept before presenting a fact, statement, or opinion. The preference is to begin a message or report by building up a theoretical argument before moving on to a conclusion. The conceptual principles underlying each situation are valued.

FIGURE 4.1. LEADING

Egalitarian The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is low. The best boss is a facilitator among equals. Organizational structures are flat. Communication often skips hierarchical lines.

Hierarchical The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is high. The best boss is a strong director who leads from the front. Status is important. Organizational structures are multilayered and fixed. Communication follows set hierarchical lines.

SITUATION

Your team needs to make an important decision about the direction of a project. Discuss how leaders from different countries might involve their team in this decision-making process. Would they seek input from all team members equally, or would they make the decision themselves and inform the team?

FIGURE 4.1. **LEADING**

Egalitarian The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is low. The best boss is a facilitator among equals. Organizational structures are flat. Communication often skips hierarchical lines.

Hierarchical The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is high. The best boss is a strong director who leads from the front. Status is important. Organizational structures are multilayered and fixed. Communication follows set hierarchical lines.

FIGURE 4.1. LEADING

Egalitarian The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is low. The best boss is a facilitator among equals. Organizational structures are flat. Communication often skips hierarchical lines.

Hierarchical The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is high. The best boss is a strong director who leads from the front. Status is important. Organizational structures are multilayered and fixed. Communication follows set hierarchical lines.

FIGURE 6.1. TRUSTING

Task-based	Trust is built through business-related activities. Work relationships are built and dropped easily, based on the practicality of the situation. You do good work consistently, you are reliable, I enjoy working with you, I trust you.
Relationship-based	Trust is built through sharing meals, evening drinks, and visits at the coffee machine. Work relationships build up slowly over the long term. I've seen who you are at a deep level, I've shared personal time with you, I know others well who trust you, I trust you.

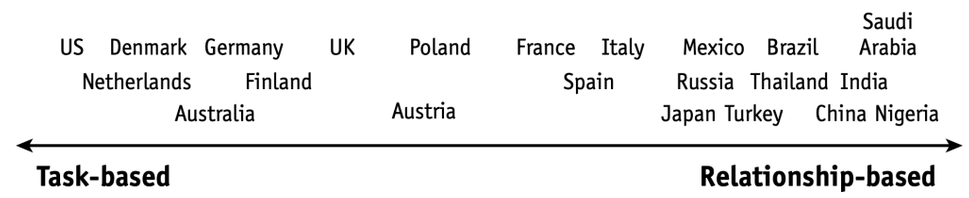
SITUATION

You are negotiating a new partnership with another company. Discuss how businesspeople from different countries might build trust with their potential partners. Would they focus on demonstrating competence and reliability through their work, or would they prioritize building a personal relationship first?

FIGURE 6.1. TRUSTING

Task-based	Trust is built through business-related activities. Work relationships are built and dropped easily, based on the practicality of the situation. You do good work consistently, you are reliable, I enjoy working with you, I trust you.
Relationship-based	Trust is built through sharing meals, evening drinks, and visits at the coffee machine. Work relationships build up slowly over the long term. I've seen who you are at a deep level, I've shared personal time with you, I know others well who trust you, I trust you.

FIGURE 6.1. TRUSTING

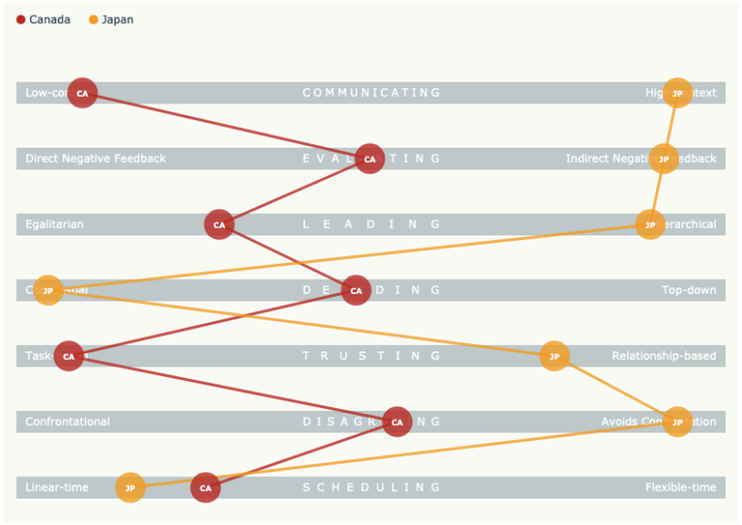


Task-based Trust is built through business-related activities. Work relationships are built and dropped easily, based on the practicality of the situation. You do good work consistently, you are reliable, I enjoy working with you, I trust you.

Relationship-based Trust is built through sharing meals, evening drinks, and visits at the coffee machine. Work relationships build up slowly over the long term. I've seen who you are at a deep level, I've shared personal time with you, I know others well who trust you, I trust you.

INTERMISSION

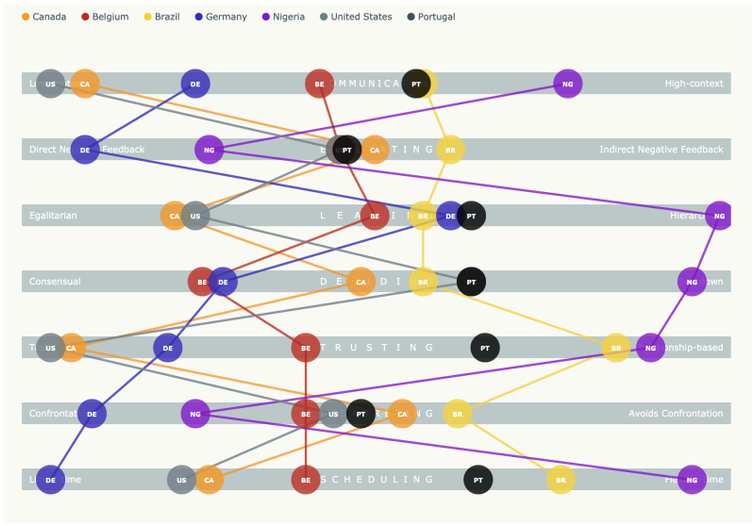
Using the Culture Map



This is my personal case

I can map my cultural context and Japan’s cultural context, and then look for gaps where I can pay special attention to ensure I have a good working relationship

Using the Culture Map



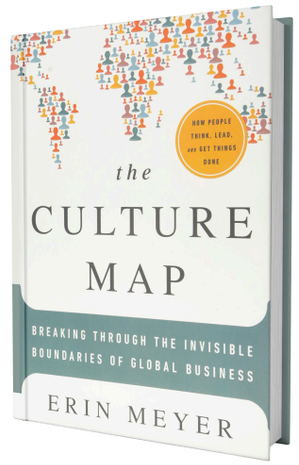
In fact, I did one for my entire company! This is just an example. The book has WAY more detail and examples. It is short and very informative.

Closing

🤫 Did you find anything surprising in your conversations tonight?

🤔 Thinking back on your previous experiences, did you have any “Ah-hah”☝️ moments?

🔮 Going forward, what will you do differently when communicating with your intercultural colleagues?



شكراً
Ευχαριστώ
감사합니다
ಧನ್ಯವಾದ
谢谢
આભાર
നന്ദി
አመሰግናለሁ
Спасибо
Thank you
நன்றி
شكريہ
धन्यवाद
ありがとう
ధన్యవాదాలు
Cảm ơn
გმადლობთ
ಧನ್ಯವಾದ
ขอบคุณ
ধন্যবাদ