

One of the valuable aspects of personality theories is their ability to transcend cultures. With the divergence of communications styles in cultures around the world, one would think that personality theories would only be relevant in the cultures that created them. That's not proven to be true according to Dr. Susan Dellinger PhD., author of *Communicating Beyond our Differences*. In fact, understanding personality theories can actually help people overcome cultural differences.

Bridging the communications gap

One of the core principles in Dr. Dellinger's **Psycho-Geometrics®** system is the importance of "flexing". This is the ability to adjust one's own communication style to adapt to that of another. In **Psycho-Geometrics®**, this is based on the behaviours common in one's dominant shape.

What Dr. Dellinger has found is that the five shapes that form the foundation of her system are not limited by cultural factors. They apply in cultures and countries all over the world. In fact, flexing with a person who is from a different culture or country has proven to help bridge communication gaps and improve relationships.

Flexing in a global environment

Many people are now working in the global arena and have need of new, intercultural communication skills. Flexing is one of those skills. Flexing puts the communicator into the shoes of the other person. It is receiver-oriented. It creates an environment in which communication is focused on ensuring that the message is delivered in a way that the other person is prepared to receive it. And it focuses on building relationships.

Inherent in flexing is the ability to be sensitive to the needs of others, particularly as they relate to communications. Everyone has heard horror stories of people who did not adjust their communication style to that of another culture, often with embarrassing results.

An International Perspective

Taking the shape theory to a higher level, Dr. Dellinger has researched the application of **Psycho-Geometrics®** to the symbols of countries to help people understand their cultures better. She has discovered that, "by applying the interpretations of the shapes to these symbols, we can learn more about the 'cultural personality' of a country or people" and she has compiled a list of countries in her book along with an explanation of symbols to describe different cultures. This has proven valuable to people who understand **Psycho-Geometrics®** and wish to apply it successfully when working in other countries.