

Misunderstanding Others

Differences are sometimes perceived as threatening. Other cultures may be very different from yours and might go against your religious or moral beliefs. However, we are often uninformed and lacking information about other cultures. This can lead to misunderstanding.

Everyone belongs to a certain culture. As Arabs, we all share a national culture but we also belong to all kinds of sub-cultures. Sub-cultures are smaller groups that have their own special behaviors and beliefs. Regions of the country, social and professional groups, teams and clubs can all be subcultures. Each of these subcultures has a culture of their own and these cultures are usually accepted but there are times when we aren't so accepting such as:

- When we have a preconceived idea about someone based on their ethnicity or where they come from
- When we judge someone just because they look different
- When we put someone down because they practice a particular religion

Understanding Others

Remember, when it comes to various cultures we have to Learn, Respect, Honor and Celebrate the wide array of differences. Staying open and tolerant allows us to take part in the all that our cultural diversity has to offer.

Become more culturally aware by:

- Asking questions
- Doing research about other culture
- Being open-minded and tolerant
- Experiencing new things
- Volunteering with a group that is different from yours

Try not to judge others and remember:

- Cultural differences should be viewed as strengths and not as weaknesses.
- We all have more in common than we think.
- Sometimes prejudice occurs out of fear. Be informed.
- Inappropriate use of jokes—where one group is put down due to their differences—is inappropriate behavior.
- Awareness, understanding and acceptance are important . You have to be aware of your difference and be able to understand them, in order for acceptance to occur.
- Different doesn't mean wrong.

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- We should always remember that some cultural practices and beliefs go back thousands of years.
 - Just because it might not be right for you, doesn't mean it's not right for someone else.
 - Religious traditions can be difficult to understand, but they should be treated with respect. Try to learn as much as you can about an unfamiliar belief, so that you won't accidentally insult or embarrass someone.
 - So much of our distrust or fear of another culture comes from simply not knowing enough about it.