

How Would You Feel?

Here are some awareness exercises. They are short incidents in which you picture yourself interacting with somebody. That person's behavior stimulates expectations within you about his or her intentions toward you, or causes you to make moral inferences about the person. From a list of available responses to each incident, please choose one or more. Then try to figure out what values guided your choice. We will come back to the stories in chapter 2, when you will be in a position to interpret your responses from a cultural point of view.

The Shabby Guitar Player

You are in a restaurant having dinner with an acquaintance. A shabby man with a guitar comes to your table and offers to play. How do you feel about this?

1. This man is a beggar and should find a job.
2. This man is filthy and disgusting.
3. This man is to be pitied.
4. You do not know this man, and you have nothing to do with him.
5. Could be interesting. Maybe he plays well.
6. The waiter should remove this man.

A Meeting in the Street

You are walking along the street in a town that is not your own. The street is quiet. Somebody crosses the street and walks toward you. What do you think?

1. This person means to rob you.
2. This person means to ask for directions.
3. This person means to have a chat with you.
4. This person might invite you to dinner.
5. This person is going to tell you that you are not allowed to be here.
6. This person means to sell you something.

A Welcome at the Airport

You are headed to a formal business meeting with somebody you have never met before. When you get off the airplane, a warmly smiling woman wearing jeans and sandals is holding up a sign with your name on it. What do you think?

1. She must be a secretary.
2. She is probably the person with whom you will have the meeting.
3. It is wonderful to be welcomed so warmly.
4. How dare someone meet you in such an informal outfit.
5. There must be an error, because you were expecting a formal-looking gentleman.

The Intruder

You are standing at a reception, engaged in conversation with another person you vaguely know. Suddenly a third person arrives and starts to talk to your conversation partner without seeming to notice you. What do you think?

1. This must be a close friend of your conversation partner.
2. This must be an absolute brute to push you aside in this manner.
3. Your conversation partner should ask the intruder to wait a moment.
4. This must be a VIP (Very Important Person).
5. This must be somebody with a very urgent matter.
6. Your conversation partner should introduce you to the newcomer.
7. Nothing.

What Would You Do?

Here are four more short incidents. Read them and choose from the options how you would act. Then think about what values guided your choices. In some cases, different values might make you hesitate between different options. We will also come back to these stories in chapter 2, when you will be in a position to interpret your proposed action from a cultural point of view.

The Returning Athlete

You are the mayor of a small town. An athlete from your town took part in the Olympic Games. The athlete is due to return tomorrow, having obtained fourth place in an event. What sort of official welcome will you prepare for her?

1. None, because a fourth place is not worth anything. If only it had been a gold medal....
2. None, because there is no protocol for officially receiving returning sports players or participants.
3. A grand one, because even if she did not win, she did participate in the Olympic Games and that is a great achievement.
4. A grand one, because she is one of us and she has honored our town.
5. You will ask the city council for advice.

The Accident

You are chairing a very important business meeting, for which some attendees have made a transoceanic flight. Millions of dollars are involved. During the meeting one of your local colleagues, a financial expert, receives a message: his eight-year-old child has been hit by a car and is hospitalized with very severe injuries. How do you react?

1. You cancel the meeting and arrange for a sequel on the following day.
2. You let your colleague leave the meeting.
3. You leave the room for a moment with your colleague and tell him that although you would like him to stay, he can leave if he wants to.
4. You go on with the meeting, asking your colleague to stay.

Train or Car?

You are a commuter. The car trip to work takes approximately one hour, the train ride, approximately an hour and a half. Do you prefer to go by car or by train?

1. By car, because if I travel by train, people will think I can't afford a car.
2. By car, because it is faster.
3. By car, because it is private.
4. By car, because people in my position do not travel by public transport.
5. By train, because it is safer.
6. By train, because it allows me to get some work done while traveling.
7. By train, because I might meet interesting people.
8. By train, because it is better for the environment.
9. Either way is fine, whichever is cheaper in the long run.

A Virtual Contact

On the Web you have found the site of somebody you might want to start a business relationship with. How would you establish the first contact?

1. Write a formal, polite paper letter on your company's letterhead.
2. Send an e-mail starting "Dear Mr. so-and-so" and ending "Kind regards, X."
3. Send an e-mail starting "My name is X and I have a proposal that might interest you" and ending with your first name.
4. Have your secretary arrange a phone call.
5. Call the person on the phone yourself.

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