## Why We Need Each Other to Feel Good About Ourselves

The incredibly important thing to remember as you begin your cultural assessment is that all human beings are valuable. You and I have never been, and will not ever be, culturally or personally superior to any other human being. That’s pretty much it on this matter.

You also need to realize that all human beings deserve to be treated with respect and dignity; regardless of what country they were born in, their race, culture, how they worship and their life ways. In order for you to experience happiness in your life you need others. You’re probably aware that you need others to feel good about yourself.

The last important thing to remember is that your culture is no better or worse than any other culture. To accept this assertion you have to acknowledge that cultural differences are not bad. Remember the term *cultural relativity*? It means that what works for one culture may not work for another. It’s just that we’re so accustomed and culturally programmed to value and reinforce like behavior in our culture. In our culture, there is a phenomenon called ***sameness.*** It means we all like to behave in similar ways and we value sameness in others. This expectation of sameness is a powerful one to break because, in our society, we are constantly being reinforced for achieving similar things, such as earning exceptional grades, promotions, and other achievements. For example, most Americans lead linear lives.

###### Agents of Socialization

So, what are agents of socialization? ***Agents of socialization*** refers to individuals and institutions that shaped your development, such as mom and dad, siblings, peers, school, and the media. These agents are part of the socialization process. Life is one long socialization process..

# Primary and Secondary Socialization

Mom and dad raising you is called ***primary socialization***. Enlisting in any branch of the armed services represents***secondary socialization.***Attending law school or a police academy are other examples of secondary socialization experiences. You could even call marriage a secondary socialization experience. All I want to say about marriage is that it’s an institution based on romantic love. If you think about how we select our marital partners in Western culture, you’ll realize we pretty much choose our mates based on homogamy. ***Homogamy*** is a fancy word referring to the tendency for people who share similar social characteristics to marry each other.

In a marriage, you assume specific, nicely defined roles and the duties assigned to these roles need to be satisfied in order for you to experience marital bliss It’s about getting socialized into different roles and their duties. I’m in an ***egalitarian marriage,*** meaning there’s lots of gender equality, power equality, voice equality, trust, openness, and, well… that’s about it..

Now that you know about the agents of socialization, let’s discuss how they influenced your development into the wonderful human being that you are today. You know, socialization starts the moment you enter the world. Labor and delivery. Your mom labored and you were delivered to the world. I guess you don’t remember much about the joy associated with this experience. I hope your parents remember the joy associated with this experience. Don’t feel bad, most people don’t remember much about the first day their social life began. Actually, most of us don’t recall anything about the first day of our life. Anyway, after everyone welcomes you to our wonderful world, the socialization process steadily begins to unfold.

***Socialization*** refers to the way your mom and dad raised you beginning on day one. I know that healthy socialization begins with mom and dad holding you lots, cuddling you, responding to your needs, such as changing your diapers and feeding you when you got hungry. It’s a pretty predictable schedule early on and it’s your parent’s responsibility to create this safe, trusting, familiar, responsive, and anticipatory-like environment. Oh yeah, your parents also needed to tell you they loved you. Hopefully your parents tell you they love you now. What more validation do you need that you’re an intelligent, worthwhile, loved and valued human being?

Let’s discuss ***acceptance.*** Acceptance more than conveys welcome to the club or the neighborhood. If I’m comfortable interacting with you in my club then it expresses my approval of you. For our purposes, we need to discuss how acceptance relates to cultural diversity. Remember, if you look like me, dress like me, and talk like me, then I’ll be more likely to accept you. However, if you don’t, I’ll be less likely to accept you based on some differences that shows your otherness, such as your physical features.