



WHAT IS... CULTURAL HUMILITY



DEFINITION:

WE ARE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS in culture, which shapes our worldviews. Therefore, how we engage with cultural differences impacts how we develop relationships with others. Cultural humility is a way of being when we relate to cultural differences that consider one's culture not superior to others. A definition of cultural humility is "the keen awareness of how culture shapes all individuals' experiences and perspectives, including the impact of power, privilege, and oppression."¹ In other words, cultural humility is moving us away from understanding the experiences and perspectives of others as an outcome but rather as a process.



BIBLICAL/SPIRITUAL/THEOLOGICAL FRAMING OR REFERENCES:

IN HIS LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS, the apostle Paul reminds their community that since they are new spiritual creations in Jesus, part of what it means to be rooted in Christ is to develop "compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience (Colossians 3:12, NIV)." Humility is at the root of what it means to be a disciple, to walk in the ways of Jesus. When we think of cultural humility, we are invited to take a posture like Jesus: of immense curiosity, openness to experience, and a growing willingness to be transformed by the experience of another.



EXAMPLE(S):

EXAMPLES OF CULTURAL HUMILITY INCLUDE:

The shift from cultural competence to humility is not simply one of semantics but rather emphasis. Competence assumes a destination, that a person or a community can reach a level of mastery as it relates to human differences. In contrast, humility suggests a process, a lifelong journey toward awareness that allows us to better see and meet people where they are.

Imagine yourself at a new local restaurant serving food different from your culture of origin. When you order what you thought was a dish you are familiar with, the dish comes out with a different flavor profile or texture; how do you navigate your emotional experience?

¹ Fisher-Borne, Marcie, Jessie Montana Cain, and Suzanne L. Martin. "From mastery to accountability: Cultural humility as an alternative to cultural competence." *Social Work Education* 34.2 (2015): 165-181.

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REFLECTION:

QUESTION #1

Where can I be more intentionally curious about the experience of another this week without assuming I understand their experience?



QUESTION #2

How can I better acknowledge the framework of another individual or community and allow it to inform my decision making?



EXAMPLE(S) CONTINUED:

Cultural humility would invite you to consider your unspoken expectations and would invite you to be curious rather than judgmental about the dish in question. Cultural humility suggests that while you hold your particular convictions about an event or an idea, you do so lightly, with a willingness to be changed or educated by each and every cultural experience.