

Volume 10, Issue 3

MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

BUILDING BRIDGES

Understanding Different Cultures

Human Connections

3

Building Bridges

4

Understanding Different Cultures

6

Human Connections

8

Reaching Out

9

Treating the Elderly with Respect

10

Parenting from the Heart

6 tips to talk to your child about disabilities

12

Notable Quotes

Celebrate diversity

Issue Editor

Motivated Vol 10, Issue 3
Christina Lane

Design

awexdesign

Contact Us:
Email
Website

motivated@motivatedmagazine.com
www.motivatedmagazine.com

Copyright © 2018 by Motivated,
all rights reserved

One of the phrases used a lot recently on social media is, "If you see something, say something." It refers to each of us being responsible to speak out, and I might add, do something, when we see something out of the ordinary or outright wrong. No wrongs will be righted if we don't, and terrible things can happen if we turn a blind eye.

We all have God-given talents and abilities and have been entrusted with skills, resources, time, energy, minds, and awareness to invest in our families, communities, and the world at large.

There are many ways to do this, of course. Each of us bring our unique personalities and circumstances to the table. Some may feel called to care for orphans or the elderly, others may want to help feed the hungry or visit the solitaire, while yet others of us simply want to be an example of positivity and caring in the work place. Other ways to serve are taking care of animals and nature, and preserving our environment, or being a peacemaker in a culturally diverse world.

Whatever it is, when we all take responsibility for something that needs improving, we can be assured of positive results, and build for future generations.

The articles in this issue of *Motivated* give more ideas of how we can make a difference to the world and those around us. Of course, in addition to our responsibilities to our families and society, we also have a responsibility to ourselves. As author Eleanor Brownn puts it, "Rest and self-care are so important. When you take time to replenish your spirit, it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel." It's a good reminder to cover all our bases.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

Building Bridges

Author Unknown

Once upon a time two brothers who lived on adjoining farms fell into conflict. It was the first serious rift in 40 years of farming side by side, sharing machinery, and trading labor and goods as needed without a hitch. Then the long collaboration fell apart. It began with a small misunderstanding and it grew into a major difference, and finally it exploded into an exchange of bitter words followed by weeks of silence.

One morning there was a knock on John's door. He opened it to find a man with a carpenter's toolbox. "I'm looking for a few days' work" he said. "Perhaps you would have a few small jobs here and there. Could I help you?"

"Yes," said the older brother. "I do have a job for you. Look across the creek at that farm. That's my neighbor, in fact, it's my younger brother. Last week there was a meadow between us and he took his bulldozer to the river levee and now there is a creek between us. Well, he may have done this to spite me, but I'll show him. See that pile of lumber curing by the barn? I want you to build me a fence—an 8-foot fence—so I won't need to see his place anymore. Cool him down, anyhow."

The carpenter said, "I think I understand the situation. Show me the nails and the post-hole digger and I'll be able to do a job that pleases you."

The older brother had to go to town for supplies, so he helped the carpenter get the materials ready and then he was off for the day. The carpenter worked hard all that day measuring, sawing, nailing.

About sunset when the farmer returned, the carpenter had just finished his job. The farmer's eyes opened wide, his jaw dropped.

There was no fence there at all. It was a bridge—a bridge stretching from one side of the creek to the other! A fine piece of work, handrails and all—and the neighbor, his younger brother, was coming across, his hand outstretched. "You are quite a fellow to build this bridge after all I've said and done."

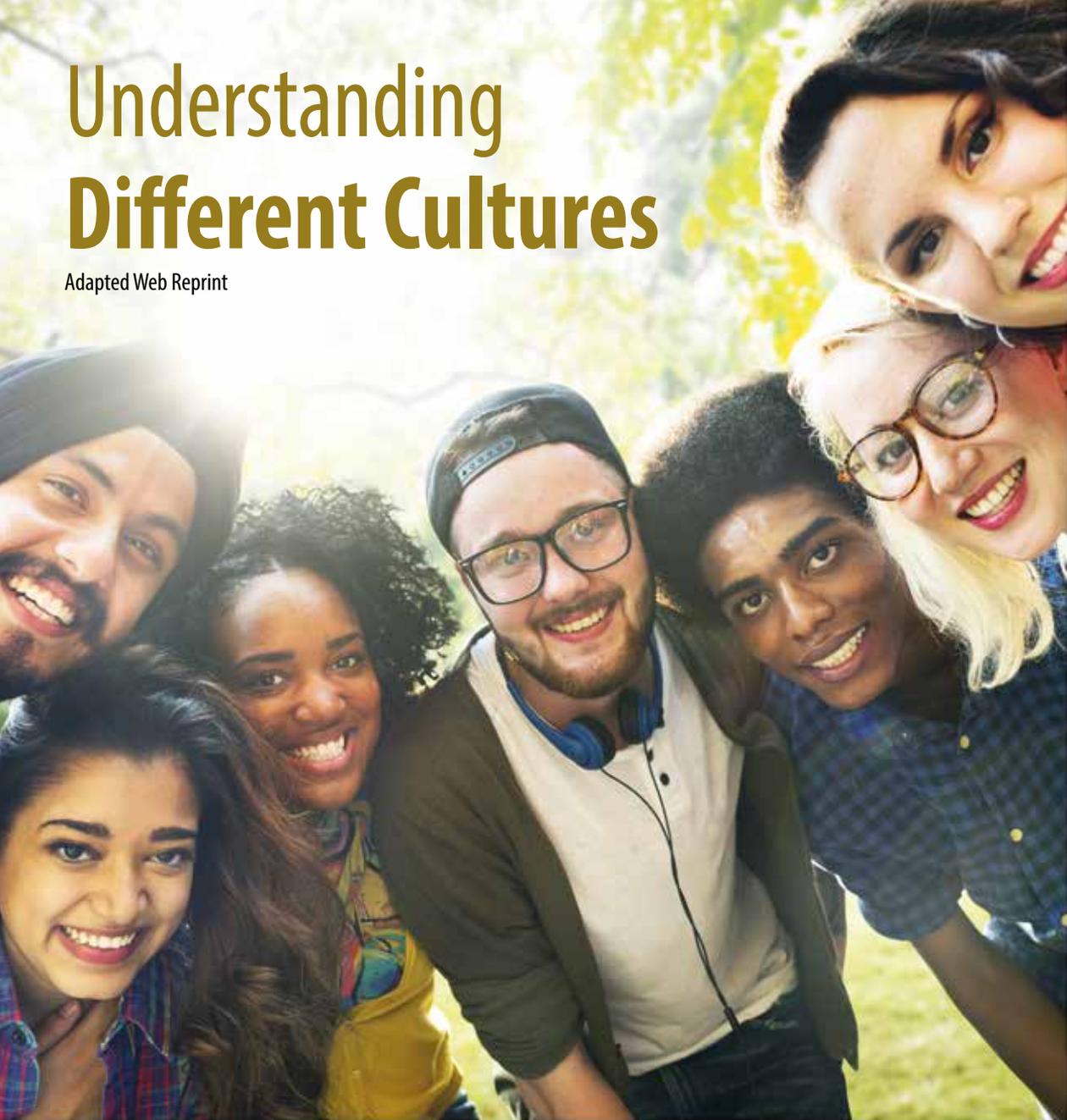
The two brothers met at the middle of the bridge, taking each others' hand. They turned to see the carpenter hoist his toolbox on his shoulder. "No, wait! Stay a few days. I've got a lot of other projects for you," said the older brother.

"I'd love to stay on," the carpenter said, "but I have so many more bridges to build."

Differences will often arise in human relationships, but building bridges of understanding and respect can overcome differences, and keep them from becoming large obstacles. ■

Understanding Different Cultures

Adapted Web Reprint



You're living in a vibrant multicultural country, so it's great that you want to understand cultures other than your own. There are a few ways to do this, but the most important is to remember that we're all just people who are trying to do the best we can. So, taking each person on their own merit always pays off.

Different experiences

The world is becoming more multicultural, which means that people and traditions from other countries and cultures are becoming more noticeable and celebrated. Unless you live under a rock, you're going to meet people, and experience situations, that are unfamiliar to you.

Ways to understand cultural differences

It can be very easy to stick with what you know, rather than trying to meet people who are different from you. However, actively trying to understand and embrace cultural differences can open you up to a whole world of exciting new possibilities and experiences. Here's what you can do:

Become self-aware

Work out your own beliefs, values, and personal biases. Yep, it can be confronting, but by doing this you'll be able to think about how these traits might impact how you approach and understand differences.

Do your own research

Learning about different cultures can be a great way of developing an understanding of cultural diversity. Do some research online or through books, and study some of the history and traditions of other cultures.

Talk to someone from a different cultural background

Try and get to know them a bit better. You don't necessarily have to ask them directly about their culture, but by getting to know them you'll automatically find out more about their life and experiences, and you will start noticing similarities.

Travel!

One of the best ways to experience and understand other cultures is to actually live among them. It might take a while to save for, but planning a trip overseas to a country you're

interested in can be the best way of opening yourself up to new cultures.

Be more accepting

Sometimes it's not all that easy to gain an understanding of cultural differences, for whatever reason. In these situations, the best approach is just to acknowledge that some people are different and to accept that that is okay.

Culturally different, with diverse opinions

Even if you hear or read something about a certain culture, it's important to realize that this doesn't mean everyone from that particular background acts/thinks/believes the same thing. Just as not everyone you know has identical beliefs, people who come from different cultural backgrounds aren't all a certain way, either.

Don't stereotype

One of the biggest difficulties to overcome in understanding cultural differences is making judgments based on one opinion. Do your own research and make an effort to actually learn about people, instead of making broad-brush assessments.

Everyone is unique

The main thing to remember is that everyone, no matter what their cultural background, has different opinions, habits, and ways of life. The sooner you accept that everyone is different, the easier it becomes to understand and embrace cultural differences. ■

HUMAN CONNECTIONS

By Karthik Rajan, adapted

There was something different and memorable about this car ride with my family. “What do you think about the party?” was my conversation starter, which soon digressed towards cultures.

My mom was visiting from India, and she shared an interesting observation. “I enjoyed everything about the party, but I need to get used to the hugs. It is quite different from what I am used to.”

That statement got my curiosity antenna up. I quickly followed up. “Can you elaborate?”

She added, “I grew up with the Namaste or Vanakkam as a regular social greeting. Among adults, open outstretched arms were usually reserved for emotionally difficult circumstances like death.”

I was stunned by her detailed observation of the hug. She was correct. Growing up in South India, I could vividly recall that words were in short supply during those emotionally charged moments. Open outstretched arms was the recurring snapshot. Gender and age were irrelevant, which is quite remarkable for a region where women and men have separate areas for seating in public transport.

My mother added, “In the most difficult moments, words almost always fail you, but the emotional connection of the hug speaks volumes and is almost always right.”

Her insight on the hug made me think. The implication for life both at work and at home could be legendary to my journey in trying to understand what truly connects people.

In life, we observe many things. We remember some and we recall few. My observation is that the stories in books and movies have a high recall rate as they connect with me as a person. On the other hand, great actors vouch that body language speaks volumes, and statistically it makes up 80+ percent of regular communication.

During one of my long haul international flights, I decided to do an experiment in order to experience this connection first hand. I watched movies on the personalized screen without headsets. It was eye opening. Without hearing any of the dialogue, I did not miss a beat.





Body language speaks across genres and cultures. As humans, we are able to pick up much of the context and detail without hearing the spoken word.

It is very tempting to dig deeper. For example, Paul Ekman—the inspiration behind the TV series, *Lie to Me*—reported that only 50 out of the 20,000 people he tested were able to pick up on and interpret micro expressions—1/25th of a second of change on faces. For the remaining 19,950 folks, there is elegance in simplicity. The simplest expressions of the body are the hugs, high fives, handshakes, and pats on the back. The hug is the sensory feeling with the most surface area. It is the first instinct of a mother when she first holds her newborn.

Stories and statistics stimulate different parts of the brain during one-on-one interaction, both of which involve using our mouth to speak. When we do not open our mouth and speak only with our body language, such as handshakes, hugs, or pats on the back, they are powerful on their own.

Words of empathy like, “I feel for your loss,” can evoke the right emotions. A well-meaning hug speaks volumes. “We will work towards a fair deal,” can evoke a sense of a meeting of equals. A handshake with palms perpendicular to the ground profoundly invokes the same sense. “Great work on the project, really well done,” can invoke an inner smile in your team member. A well-meaning pat on the back can be the memorable icing, cherished in the long haul.

A few weeks ago, I had to pick up my daughter early from school. She was in the playground, so she led me to her kindergarten class to pick up her bag. After picking up her bag, she earnestly showed me some of her classmates’ work that was proudly adorning the wall. There was one display that I will remember forever.

It was a collection of heart shaped symbols with each child’s wish handwritten within the heart. 80 percent of the hearts had one wish that stood out. It was not a wish for a special holiday gift, pizza, or cake. This wish came in all shapes, sizes, and angles—but it was crystal clear—hugs!

Success stems from the ability to connect with people. In our earnestness to connect, let us be more conscious of the instinctive acts that make a difference. There is always elegance in the simplicity of elementary acts, such as hugs, high fives, handshakes, and pats on the back. They go a long way.

Of course, we should always be sensitive to people of different cultures who may not be used to certain customs. Even though they may like our actions, such as giving and receiving hugs or other gestures, they might prefer to stick to their own cultural actions and gestures. It all comes down to respecting the other person and what is culturally appropriate for them. ■

REACHING OUT



By Julienne Maher Dimon

Four years ago, after living and working overseas for 37 years, my husband and I returned to Australia. It was just a few months before the end of the year, and we missed friends and acquaintances we would normally have spent time with during the seasonal holidays.

We decided that the best way to get over missing our friends would be to make new ones, so we went and introduced ourselves to our different neighbors.

We discovered that the ones living behind us were originally from Iran, and had only been living in Australia for just a little over a year. We told them we didn't have much family in town, and knew few people, and that we would like to invite them for a Christmas lunch.

They happily accepted the invitation, and went on to tell us that their first Christmas here had been a very lonely

one also. They didn't have many friends at the time, and the few people they did know were either busy celebrating at home or visiting their relatives over the holidays.

A month later, we had a wonderful lunch together. They brought a delicious traditional Iranian dish, and our son and his family joined us, too. We shared traditional Christmas and Iranian food, and exchanged stories about our different cultures and customs.

I am so glad we reached out to our neighbors when we first arrived back in Australia. Opening our home to them provided a wonderful opportunity to learn about a country and culture we were not so familiar with, and most importantly, it forged a close and enduring friendship. In fact, we just visited them in their new home, and we enjoyed a delectable Iranian barbeque together! ■

TREATING THE ELDERLY WITH RESPECT

By Dana Larson, adapted



Why It's Important to Treat Our Elders with Respect

Seniors have a thing or two to teach us about enduring change and handling life's adversity. Even if a senior's hearing or memory isn't what it was in the past, our elders have great wisdom to impart. Respecting elders includes making time to listen and spending quality time with them.

When Ageism Is Rampant

People can become uncomfortable dealing with the emotions of aging and the trials and tribulations of the golden years, which contributes to ageism. Ageism is defined as a tendency to regard older persons as debilitated, and unworthy of attention.

We have to remember that seniors are knowledgeable people who have something to contribute to society in the wisdom they've gained from their life histories, even if it's a story about life or history. It's more than respect—it's about really taking the time to listen to our grandparents, parents, and other elderly people.

The simple act of paying attention does wonders. After all, learning history and spending quality time together can benefit everyone and create irreplaceable memories.

Most of our grandparents and parents raised us to believe in the importance of treating others with courtesy and respect. These past generations usually held tight to their dignity, ethics, faith, honesty, and integrity; which is exactly why condescending or even inadvertent belittling is not okay.

What Caregivers Should Take Note Of

Being a caregiver can be a tough responsibility, as the role can be both emotionally and physically taxing. It will demand devotion and patience since the loss of independence is one of the most difficult transitions for anyone who suddenly requires the intrusion of a caregiver. Being patient in difficult situations can be exhausting, but showing our elders respect is always the best choice.

It's important to remember to be not only considerate, but also polite to people whose bodies and minds are aging, simply because of the hands of time. Ageism exists, therefore being kind and showing compassion to the elderly shows them that they are accepted for who they are and included in the family and society at large. ■

6 TIPS TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT DISABILITIES

PARENTING
FROM THE HEART



By Lindsay Hutton, adapted

Whether it's a classmate who is on the autism spectrum or a loved one with muscular dystrophy, your child probably has someone in her life with a disability that she might have questions about. No matter what the situation, it's important to be prepared and to address your child's curiosity about disabilities as openly and honestly as you can. The following tips can help you be prepared to talk to your child about different people when she comes to you for answers.

It's OK to Notice

Kids, especially young ones, are naturally curious, so when they see someone with a disability, their first instinct is to ask about it. If you see your child staring at someone with a disability, take the lead and start a conversation, but avoid a detailed explanation or a lot of emotion when explaining it. A short and matter-of-fact description will answer your child's questions while showing her that the person has nothing to be ashamed of.

For example, if you see a child with

muscular dystrophy in a wheelchair, you can say to your child, "I see you looking at that little girl in the wheelchair, and you might be wondering why she needs a wheelchair. Some people's muscles work a little differently, and her wheelchair helps her move around, just like your legs help you."

Try to keep your explanations positive. For example, explain that hearing aids help others hear, and wheelchairs help others move around, instead of using a negative connotation (he can't hear, she can't walk, etc).

Use Respectful Terminology

Children are like sponges and absorb everything they hear. When talking about someone with a disability, remember that words can actually hurt, so it's important not to use terminology that would make someone feel left out, or imply that they are "less than" anyone else. Avoid using derogatory terms like "cripple," "retarded," or "midget," and instead, use

terms and phrases like “wheelchair user,” “little person,” and “he has a learning disability.” Don’t use a disability as a way to describe an individual. For example, instead of saying “autistic child,” it’s better to say “a child on the autism spectrum.”

Emphasize Similarities

It’s important that your child learns that someone with a disability is still the same in a lot of ways—he still has feelings, likes to have fun, loves his family, and has a favorite sport. Take care to separate the person from his or her disability by talking to your child about how he and the person with the disability are similar.

For example, maybe your child and his neighbor who has Down Syndrome both love to watch football and go swimming. Perhaps they are the same age, or maybe they both have a pet fish. Talking about similarities will show your child that having a disability does not define a person, much like your child’s physical characteristics don’t define him.

Teach Understanding and Empathy

Instead of simply telling your child that a person with a disability can’t do something, teach your child to look for strengths instead of just focusing on weaknesses. It’s important for him to learn that just because someone can’t do something, or struggles in one area, it doesn’t mean he or she doesn’t excel in other areas. Ask your child how he would feel in somebody else’s shoes, and how he would want to be treated—and then teach him to treat others the same way. Learning empathy early on is an important life lesson.

For example, if your child has a classmate who is partially deaf, instead of focusing on the fact that he can’t hear, also ask him what his classmate is good at (math? running?), and then talk to your child about his own strengths and what he finds to be difficult. Help him see that all humans have their own strengths and weaknesses, and that he should help those just as he would want others to help him in areas with which he struggles.

Address and Condemn Bullying

Children with disabilities are easy targets, and are more prone to bullying from other children, and even adults. Talk to your child about why intentionally hurting another child’s feelings is wrong, and teach her to apologize when she has done that. It’s important for your child to know that anyone, even someone who looks or acts different, has feelings just like she does, and deserves to be treated nicely and with respect.

Treat Their Devices with Respect

Teach your child to treat medical devices, such as canes, wheelchairs, and service dogs, with respect. Make sure she understands that the devices are there to help the person who needs them, and that they are not toys.

It can be tricky when your child sees a service dog in a public place and wants to pet it. In this situation, give her a matter-of-fact explanation for why she can’t. For example, you can simply say, “That dog isn’t a pet—his job is to help that person see. He’s working right now, so let’s not distract him.” ■

Celebrate Diversity

NOTABLE
QUOTES



Diversity: the art of thinking independently together.—**Malcolm Forbes**

It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.—**Maya Angelou**

An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.
—**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

We are all different, which is great because we are all unique. Without diversity life would be very boring.—**Catherine Pulsifer**

We need to give each other the space to grow, to be ourselves, to exercise our diversity. We need to give each other space so that we may both give and receive such beautiful things as ideas, openness, dignity, joy, healing, and inclusion.—**Max de Pree**

Diversity in the world is a basic characteristic of human society, and also the key condition for a lively and dynamic world as we see today.—**Jintao Hu**

A lot of different flowers make a bouquet.—**Muslim Origin**

Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common. Celebrate it every day.
—**Author Unknown**

