

Where Culture and Personality Type Meet

Preliminary findings from independent
online survey and one-on-one interviews

According to UN estimates, over 214 million people currently live outside of their passport country. They include refugees, lifestyle migrants, students, ethnic groups, and professional assignees, or “expats”, sent by their organizations on international assignment.

Millions more travel abroad, work with team members from another country, and live in increasingly international communities.

Expat assignments are costly and complex: an organization will spend about four to five times the annual salary for every person they send abroad.

Support services like readiness assessments, language and culture training, home visits, and coaching amount to 5 % of total relocation cost.

If the expat fails to adapt to the new culture, the cost of lost opportunity doubles. “Family concerns” far outweigh any other assignment challenges.

Research indicates that 6 % of all expat assignments fail. In the ca. \$10bn US relocation market that means \$600m are lost every year.

My name is Doris Füllgrabe, and I have been an expat since 1997. Born and raised in Germany, I have since lived in Scotland, England, Spain, the Canary Islands, Mexico, and the United States.

I’m a cross-cultural trainer, expat coach, and Myers-Briggs® Master Practitioner. I know that **combining personality type and culture-sensitive coaching allows expats and their families to manage their transition, adapt to their host culture, and be more effective, faster.**

In today’s global economy, this combined knowledge is equally valuable for international teams and communities in-country.

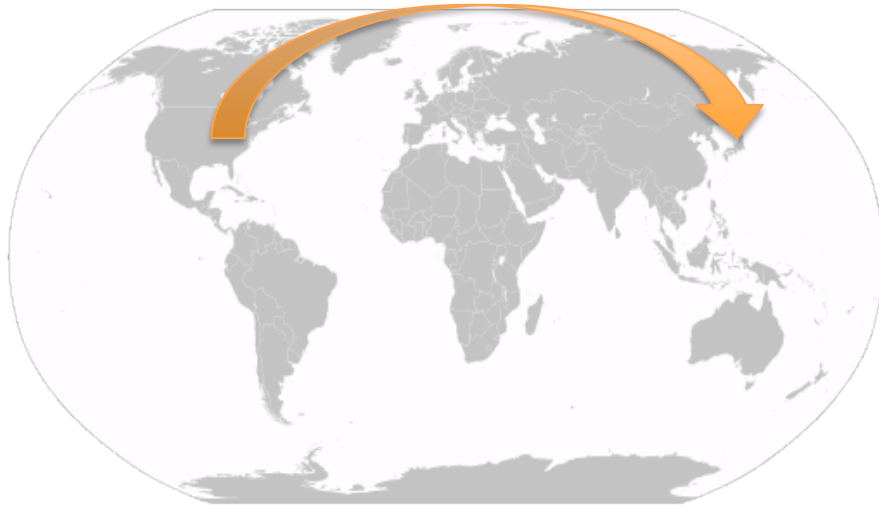
In 2012, I set out to survey expats who know their personality type about their international experiences. They filled out an online questionnaire and some agreed to a follow-up interview.

This booklet showcases five of my US American respondents’ profiles. They offer insights into challenges and development opportunities.

The survey will remain open and I hope to interview more expats and add to the profiles. If you’d like to participate, please visit

www.buildingthelifeyouwant.com. Thank you.

US American ESTJ in Japan



ESTJ Keywords

Practical, decisive, logical, efficient, implementation

US Values

Individual Freedom
Self Reliance
Equality of Opportunity
Capitalism
Productivity

Japanese Values

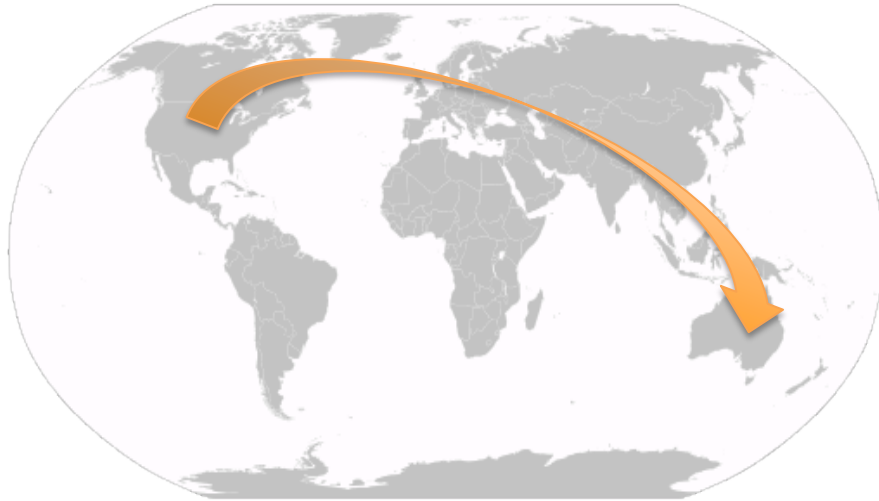
Relationships
Saving face
Hierarchy
Tradition
Achievement

American ESTJ in Japan

Female Employee, born 1981 - 1995, Accompanying Expat

5 words to describe your home culture	Very ESTJ at home; father ESTJ, mother ISFJ, brother probably INFP – very different Organized (camping with spreadsheets) Clearly defined roles Close-knit family High mobility
5 words to describe your host culture	Work seemed very competitive; rat-race Achievement is extremely important Students are expected to be perfect Sports are very competitive on the field, but teams go eat together afterward
I prepared for my move by	No trainings were provided, but once there, my mom loves culture and indoctrinated us, because she enjoys doing a lot of culture work and I do, too.
I realized I was in a different country when	During college acceptance season there was a high suicide rate among students who didn't get accepted into college. I also noticed Japanese students constantly wanted to learn from us; they always had questions. Americans aren't like that.
What's causing me the most stress	Some isolation because I didn't speak Japanese; the language barrier was difficult for me. And I didn't fit in because of my personality type. I didn't feel like a lot of females shared it.
What's helping me through the difficult times	My personality type definitely helps. When I went to a new school, be more outgoing and to make friends. I'm also very active athletically, so it was easy for me to make friends that way.
The main differences between home and host culture are	Americans have a 10-foot bubble of private space, and Japanese in a crowded bus will literally wrap up around you. If you forgot your umbrella in a store, go back two days later and it will still be there.
The main similarities	Pride in their country. Americans and Japanese have a lot of pride in who they are. They're proud of their heritage.
What I never knew but learned about myself	Coming back to America after being the minority has changed both my outlook on life, the way that I approach people, and the way that I sympathize and empathize. Moving back to America, to a small town in Georgia that still had the Confederate flag – that was a culture shock.
Advice I would give someone else who's also moving to my host country	Experience the culture, understand it, appreciate it. Have a mentor or buddy program with someone's who has been there.

US American ENFJ in Australia



ENFJ Keywords

Warm, empathetic, responsible, catalysts, sociable

US Values

Individual Freedom
Self Reliance
Equality of Opportunity
Capitalism
Productivity

Australian Values

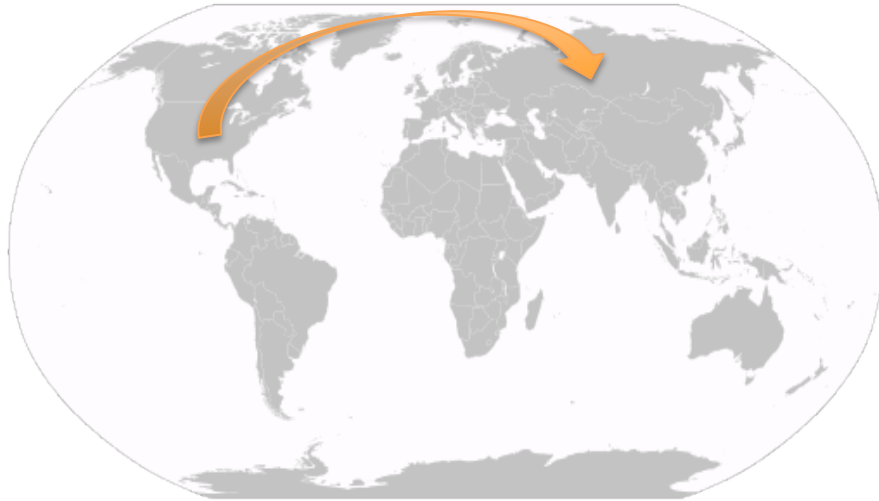
Freedom
“Mate”-ship
Egalitarianism
Fair-play
Public good

American ENFJ In Australia

Male Senior Sales Consultant, born 1951-1965, International Assignee

5 words to describe your home culture	Freedom loving Important to protect rights of the individual Success is what you do Land of Opportunity Spiritual Poverty
5 words to describe your host culture	Don't take life too seriously Leave me alone to do what I want Appreciate & respect tradition, but not too much Success is up to you Play by the rules, what rules?
I prepared for my move by	Deciding what I needed to have with me abroad, and how to stuff that into as few bags as possible. I also taught my mother how to use a laptop so we could at least communicate by email.
I realized I was in a different country when	I ordered coffee and I was asked if I wanted a "flat white." (Coffee with heated but not frothed milk)
What's causing me the most stress	Knowing that this was just a six month assignment and that essentially my life was 'on hold' until I returned to the USA.
What's helping me through the difficult times	Is knowing that I have the support of the people I am working with each day and that it's only a six-month assignment.
The main differences between my home and this new culture are	Australians seem more interesting in enjoying life than 'succeeding in life.'
The main similarities between my home and this new culture are	Some language basically (English), same modern Western values (Christianity, capitalism), pop music, movies, cultural values.
What I never knew but learned about myself	I really value being around my family.
Advice I would give someone else who's also moving to my host country	Australians are friendly, open people generally speaking. Connect with the locals as soon as possible: join a club, church; find a local pub/eating place to frequent.
Anything else I'd like to share	Be clear about how long you plan to stay, whether you view this as life change or a shorter-term adventure.

US American ENFJ in Russia



ENFJ Keywords

Warm, empathetic, responsible, catalysts, sociable

US Values

Individual Freedom
Self Reliance
Equality of Opportunity
Capitalism
Productivity

Russian Values

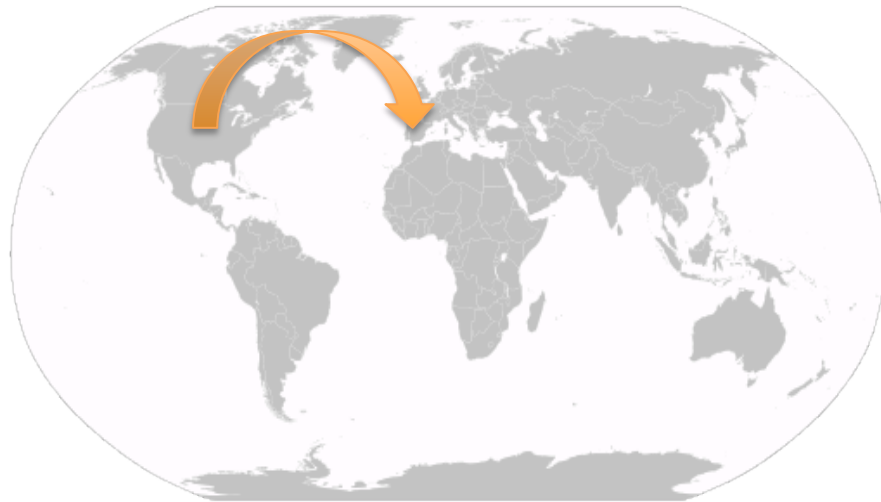
Relationships
External control
Hierarchy
Socialism
Leisure

American ENFJ in Russia

Female Business and Career Coach, born 1951-1965, Expat

5 words to describe your home culture	Creativity Optimism Future oriented Individualistic Communities
5 words to describe your host culture	Arrogant Respect for hierarchy Not open to the world Poor Bad healthcare system Friendly and warm when you know them The young generation is very entrepreneurial Loose time management
I prepared for my move by	Connecting with other expats living in Moscow through social media
I realized I was in a different country when	The first day
What's causing me the most stress	Lack of sleep
What's helping me through the difficult times	Socializing with friends in my neighborhood Dancing Zumba Working on my business development Having business partners
The main differences between my home and this new culture are	Professionalism in the US is very high compared to Russians Less open and friendly than the Americans Most Russians are very direct even blunt and racists High level of corruption
The main similarities between my home and this new culture are	Entrepreneurship for the younger generation
What I never knew but learned about myself	As a coach I learned everything about myself :-)
Advice I would give someone else who's also moving to my host country	Get into contact with expat support groups Learn how to read Cyrillic, Learn basic Russian language for daily survival

US American ENFP in Spain



ENFP Keywords

Enthusiastic, imaginative, connections, spontaneous

US Values

Individual Freedom
Self Reliance
Equality of Opportunity
Capitalism
Productivity

Spanish Values

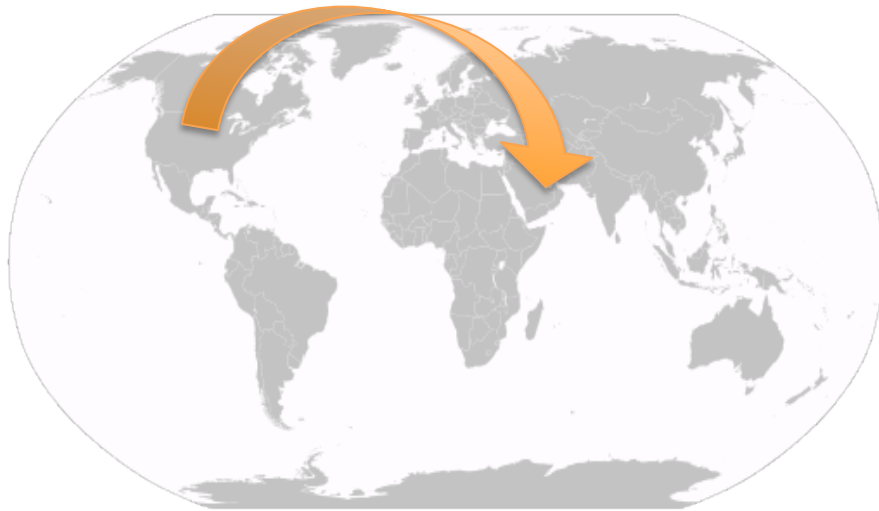
Relationships
Connections
Hierarchy
Leisure
Family

American ENFP In Spain

Female Author, Coach, born 1965 - 1980, Expat

5 words to describe your home culture	Midwest People are reliable, responsible, solid, friendly, not particularly open, guarded, dutiful, intelligent Suburban, beautiful Socioeconomic expectations / symbolism of labels Respect for authority for the most part Punctuality I always felt like a fish out of water, never like I fit in.
5 words to describe your host culture	People are pretty much on time but not necessarily reliable Everything takes a long time Doing business is mostly in person
I prepared for my move by	I had lived over there during my studies and it always felt like a second home. I considered moving to other places, but liked it here the minute I got here.
What's causing me the most stress	Was in a difficult emotional space after divorce; feelings of depression, loneliness
What's helping me through the difficult times	Skype Spending lots of time in nature, healing, self-reflection, reading, a lot of writing Slowly but surely connecting and reaching out to other people
The main differences between my home and this new culture are	Without relationships you get nowhere Constant acknowledgment that there is another human being in your sphere Constant social lubrication Corruption
The main similarities between my home and this new culture are	Emphasis on food, being outdoors, hiking Sunday family time, stores are closed, get together for a meal Barbecues
Advice I would give someone else who's also moving to my host country	Stop comparing your home country to the new country; stop wanting it to be something that it's not; see what's there that's good, interesting, enjoyable; appreciate the differences. It's about attitude more than anything. Make local connections.
Anything else I'd like to share	The international experience has been so rich. It makes me see how we are all human beings. There are false borders and lines we draw to divide us. I feel like I'm part of the whole.

US American INTP in the United Arab Emirates



INTP Keywords

Logical, skeptical, abstract, analytical, adaptable

US Values

Individual Freedom
Self Reliance
Equality of Opportunity
Capitalism
Productivity

Emirati Values

Relationships
External control
Responsibility
Loyalty
Security

American INTP in the United Arab Emirates

Female Systems Analyst, born 1935 - 1950, Accompanying Partner

5 words to describe your home culture	Midwestern: friendly, practical, honest, education, hard-working, look people in the eyes Clear set of right and wrong Primarily immigrants; pioneer values of helping neighbors but holding on to one's core Getting under the surface is difficult – we don't do the stuff that you hear on Oprah. Real serious problems are kept to themselves.
5 words to describe your host culture	Differences between men and women Conservative work and dress culture covering knees and elbows Patriarchal, kind of Victorian, puritanical, tribal Censorship on internet, magazines Strong sense of community
I prepared for my move by	Reading a book on Arab culture.
What's causing me the most stress	Finding what I wanted to do. I'm not happy if I'm not working. I had to find something where I just really feel like I can make a contribution.
What's helping me through the difficult times	Not being afraid and enjoying the adventure. I very much enjoy new things; they are my fun in life. New beginnings. Feelings of comfort and safety, because colleagues / the tribe felt responsible for us from the beginning. We have really truly found a family there that we would never do anything to embarrass them. We have a responsibility for each other.
The main differences between my home and this new culture are	Women don't tend to look the men straight in the eye and shake hands.
Advice I would give someone else who's also moving to my host country	Take the opportunity, which is not easy, to get to know the local people. There's only 10 % Emirati, and they tend to be private people. Also get to know people who are Palestinian expats. Many were displaced during the war in 1967. Go with an open mind – that is the most important thing. These people have a wonderful background and culture and they are making their way in the world just like we are.

We come into the world born with a pre-disposition to use our brains in certain ways. We go out to seek interactions and experiences that allow us to shine and use our preferred functions, reinforcing their strength and our aptitude in using them.

At the same time, our surroundings influence how we express our preferences. Depending on when and where we grow up, society's and our family's feedback may encourage or suppress development of our natural preferences.

Different cultures developed as a response to outside threats to ensure survival of the species. Today, cultural behavior is driven by values.

The introverted Feeling (Fi) function gives meaning to values. The position of Fi in our type code gives clues as to how conscious we are of our values preferences. An exploration of our own values is the first step to understanding our cultural preferences. In turn, we can begin to understand how and why people from other cultures behave differently.

International assignments are tremendous change processes. Temperament™ / Essential Motivators™ information helps expats to prepare and adapt to unexpected changes. The fourth function provides insight into potential stress triggers, while the third

can be applied to reduce stress and being playful, enjoying one's time abroad.

When working with international clients, it is important to verify their personality types through their cultural lenses. The practitioner should ideally be aware of their own cultural programming to reduce projection and misinterpretation, and have a basic understanding of the cultural values and beliefs in the client's home country.

In my experience, especially with German clients, we have to pay particular attention to the verbiage of competence and experience. For Germans, these words – as well as education, knowledge, and mastery – are anchored in cultural beliefs. It is therefore common when discussing Theorist™ descriptors for Germans of all types to be drawn to the NT profile.

I would like to thank the survey respondents and those who generously gave their time to be interviewed. Exploring the relationship between type and culture is a rich field of opportunity and learning, and I look forward to sharing more findings in the future. To stay in touch, please visit www.buildingthelifeyouwant.com.



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