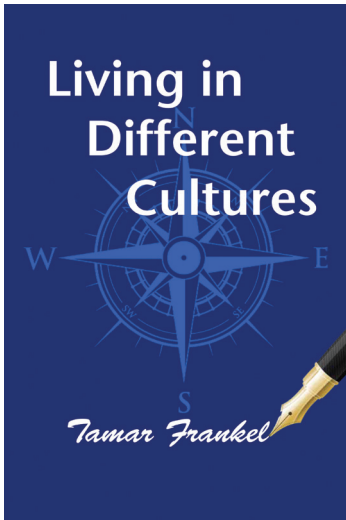


Living in Different Cultures

Tamar Frankel

BOOK CLUB GUIDE



Why do we need to focus on cultures today? Not many years ago we lived within our communities and rarely traveled even within our country. We knew our neighbors and their children. Most of us ate similar foods, spoke the same language, laughed at the same jokes, and found the same behaviors offensive. Even though the immigrants to this country acted differently, they did not travel much, just as the American-born did not travel much abroad.

Today's world is different. We travel more frequently, both within our country and abroad. We watch television news and read about different nations. In school and at work, we meet people who come from different countries, who have different manners, a different sense of humor, and different sensitivities. In sum, we are exposed to different cultures.

Living in Different Cultures Book Club Guide provides suggested questions intended to help book club leaders discover interesting topics for discussion. We hope that these ideas will enrich your conversation and increase your enjoyment of the book.

1. The “language” of culture includes signals or non-verbal communications. People use their hands to convey a message, for example:

- Touch the thumb and first finger to make a circle. In Japan this gesture means money. In United States it means OK. In Venezuela it is an offensive sign!
- In some countries, tapping the forehead with your fingers indicates “craziness” while tapping with the open palm sends the message, “I’m stupid” or “I made a mistake.”

What are other thoughts or ideas we convey through the use of our hands that may send different signals? Think of other examples of cultural signals that might be used to say something that could be misunderstood. How can you recognize when your hand signals are not understood? What would you do if the person who did not understand takes offense?

2. Silence may be a signal of respect and agreement or of disrespect and disagreement. Can you think of times this led to lack of understanding in your life? How did you resolve it?

3. Tipping is common in the United States. An Internet search for “tipping in different cultures” brings up pages of advice on customs in different cultures. Did you know that complimenting a good meal with a \$1000 tip could be offensive? Would you study the tipping customs before visiting a foreign country? Would you expect others to know that you are from the United States and assume they would just know and accept your tipping customs?

4. Tell us about a time when you were in a culture very different from your own. Was it uncomfortable or awkward for you? How did you adapt? Did you notice others making an effort to adapt to what they saw as strangeness you exhibited?

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5. Tamar Frankel shared stories about her experiences in Israel and dealing with so many different cultures. Which story resonated the most with you? Why? What did you learn from her example?
 6. Tamar Frankel states that every culture has something to give. Think of some examples of things that cultures may have to share. We enjoy foods and recipes from many cultures. What are some other examples in your life that come from other cultures?
 7. Tamar Frankel has said that “contributing is more important than winning.” Do you agree with that statement? How does it relate to living with different cultures? Discuss the differences between contribution and competition. Can you think of examples?
 8. Discuss your thoughts on the following quote from page 153. “We don’t need to judge all the rules of the other cultures. But we ought to know what to expect. We cannot assume that what is so obvious to us is obvious to everyone, or that what is good or bad is the same for everyone. Thus, before we interact with other cultures, we ought to study and try to understand how we can live with them and work with them.”
 9. Think about ways to bridge cultural gaps and how you could behave to smooth relations with people from different cultures. Argue and explain to convince? Make fun of the others’ position? Threaten? Or identify with the other party: Would I like to be treated in this or that way? Or find a compromise when the issue is not worth it and fight when it is?
 10. Ask yourselves this question as you wrestle with the ways to accommodate others’ cultures. Is my purpose to win or to find a solution with which all parties can live?
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Photo by Kalman Zabarsky for Boston University Photography.

TAMAR FRANKEL

Professor Emerita Tamar Frankel has written and taught since 1967 and continues to teach part time in the areas of fiduciary law, corporate governance, mutual funds and regulation of the financial system. She has published ten books, many regularly updated, and is a prolific author of law review and other articles and book chapters, an expert witness, and a frequent speaker on a wide variety of financial topics.

Professor Frankel has traveled in Europe, taught in Japan, and lectured in England, Switzerland, India, and China. Her books have been translated and influenced financial thinking nationally and internationally, including *Securitization*, translated into Chinese and *Fiduciary Law*, translated into Japanese.

In 2013, the Institute for Fiduciary Standard established the annual Frankel Fiduciary Prize in her honor to award individuals who advance fiduciary principles. In 2017, she received the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of American Law Schools’ (AALS) Section on Women in Legal Education. WealthManagerWeb has named her among the 50 Top Women in Wealth Management. In addition, she was noted as one of the most well-known 500 lawyers on Lawdragon, and as one of the Women Trailblazers in the Law by the ABA Commission project on Women in the Profession. In 1998, Professor Frankel was instrumental in establishing and designing the corporate structure of the Internet Corporation for Names and Numbers.

A long-time member of the Boston University School of Law faculty (1967-2018), Professor Frankel was a visiting scholar at the Securities and Exchange Commission (1995–1997) and at the Brookings Institution (1987). She has taught and lectured at Oxford University, Tokyo University, Harvard Law School, and Harvard Business School. She consulted with the People’s Bank of China and lectured in Canada, India, Malaysia, and Switzerland. A native of Israel, Professor Frankel served as an attorney in the legal department of the Israeli Air Force, an assistant attorney general for Israel’s Ministry of Justice and the legal advisor of the State of Israel Bonds Organization in Europe. She has been in private practice in Israel, Boston, and Washington, DC and is a member of the Massachusetts Bar, the American Law Institute, and The American Bar Foundation.