

**Paulette M.D. Reed**

## **Cultural Intelligence**

### **Motivational and Cognitive CQ**

My love for diversity accompanied by my desire to learn about the culture of others, outweigh any ideas of conflict or challenges that I may face. In fact, I tend to not shy away from cultural conflict, so that I can learn how to handle the conflict more effectively. In my past experiences, I have been known to face conflicts with questions. First, I would immediately apologize, and if the situation allows, I would ask what I could have done differently to avoid causing the offense. I have found that many people, despite cultural differences, are willing to help one in their understanding. I can honestly say that I find no greater joy than to work with other cultures. In fact, each month, the NATO spouses host a luncheon in my area, and I am usually in attendance. This helps me to feel free to be myself and learn more from others. The only barrier that I find at times is language. Still, I have found that most people from other countries speak French and so I will often utilize my little French to achieve a smoother line of communication. There aren't any real barriers that would prohibit me from readily interacting with diverse cultures, because I view interacting with diverse cultures as a means of learning firsthand about a new culture or sharpening my sense of awareness with cultures in which I am already aware. I believe that keeping an open mind, educating oneself, and fully embracing a culture, with the absence of tolerance, are three ways to eliminating barriers.

First, by keeping an open mind, one can fully enjoy the experiences of tasting other foods with the possibility of finding a new favorite food, wearing traditional clothing and attempting to learn the language of another will afford others the opportunity to be themselves and in doing so, it is inevitable that we learn more. Also, educating ourselves not only in the language, but in the culture of food preparations, traditional games, even participating in the culture of mourning the loss of another, can be very eye opening and in some cases, we can offer some of our own techniques of mourning, that may empower them to cope with their loss and learn how to move on with life. Finally, never allow tolerance to rear its' ugly head. In the United States, our children are taught to tolerate differences. While this may appear harmless and helpful, I can assure you that it is everything but! Tolerance teaches that we put up with something until the opportunity presents itself for us to relieve ourselves of whatever it is that we are not in favor of. Whereas, acceptance and embracing another culture, teaches us to learn and find something that we actually like or enjoy, and therefore we have a desire to not only spend quality time around those who are presenting a different idea or activity, but we desire to return to it as soon as the opportunity presents itself.