Found in Translation: Global Protocol for Foreign Delegations
EFFECTIVE CROSS-CULTURE COMMUNICATIONS

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How important is successful cross-culture communication on any international venture?
“The why is the essence of a people’s culture... If you understand why people value some things, then you can make good guesses about why they value other things. If you understand why they behave a certain way, you can interpret other behaviour with a degree of accuracy. Once you have an insight into what people think is important and how they behave, you can do business with them. You know what makes them the way they are.”

The concept of cultural intelligence

We have all heard that emotional intelligence is one of the most crucial factor in effective communications.

The question is: How do we have emotional and social intelligence when interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds or countries?
Step 1: Understand your own behaviour and your own culture
Step 2: Be curious and interested
Step 3: Build knowledge and apply it
A note on Protocol:

Certain cultures tend to be casual at meetings, arriving and sitting in an ad hoc fashion. Others approach meetings with more formality.

Many have ceremony or protocol, and if these are not followed, then for them, the meeting has not taken place.

There is also the issue of status. Who arrives first? Which is the honoured place? Who sits there? It is important to understand these patterns or the people who have gathered may not feel comfortable.
About talking....

English-speaking North Americans tend to front-load their speech. They convey the important information first and then fill in details later.

Other cultures will begin with general expressions and statements and make the point at the end of their speech. Because they encode speech differently, people also listen differently, expecting to hear what they themselves would deliver.
Wrap up and tips

1. Be a good listener.
Look approachable
Be seen to listen
Use your imagination
Ask questions
Consider writing it down

2. Be a good observer.
Notice signs that signal a lack of enthusiasm or engagement, regardless of words that signal assent.
3. Stop and confirm that you are being understood.

4. Enunciate slowly and distinctly.
   Over-punctuate with pauses and stops
   Make one point at a time
   If there is confusion, take the blame
   Avoid long sentences; keep one thought to each sentence

5. Do not shout.
   Do not speak more loudly if you are not being understood.
Lastly 6: Be yourself - your most gracious self.
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