

Articulating how we are all global intercultural people.

From our earliest days within the sphere of our family life, each of us have been on a global intercultural journey, regardless of our family or cultures of origin. We all have a starring role in this larger global intercultural narrative. Simply to be born into this modern era of compressed global intercultural interchange means we have been launched on such a global intercultural journey. Increasingly, how our life unfolds as we move out from our family of origin to play with neighbor friends, to learn about the world in our schools, to become productive members of our communities depends upon our ability to navigate this complex intercultural world. The process of recognizing and accepting the professional, personal and spiritual implications of this reality is the centerpiece of the Global Intercultural Circle work.

However, there is not broad awareness -- especially among those who are members of a majority culture or linguistic group within a given community, state or region -- that everyone is on a global intercultural journey. It's easy to recognize that those individuals who have married into a family that is ethnically or linguistically different from their families of origin or who have recently immigrated from one country to another will be obliged to learn new ways of doing things and new languages. There are obvious intercultural dynamics at play as these "bridging" individuals go about the process of adjusting to their new circumstances and acquire the new skills they need to have intimate relationships, make friends, learn at schools, set up households, make a living, and otherwise be productive members of society. Also, the other members of their families are in varying ways adjusting to having new family members of diverse backgrounds. Likewise, as people immigrate from one country to another, other members of their new communities are in varying ways adjusting to having new community members of diverse backgrounds. Whether these adjustments are productive or destructive depends initially on the extent to which members of these families or communities are prepared to acknowledge and also accept that we are all global intercultural people -- not just the newcomers of these families and these communities.

This process of acceptance can be facilitated by a consciousness raising process that includes telling our own stories, capturing the intercultural dimensions of these stories, and deciphering how these experiences have shaped the way we view and interact with others. Those of us who have been experimenting with these consciousness raising techniques through our Global Intercultural Circle work have experienced meaningful changes in our self-perception, enhanced our capacity to hear others stories, and discovered new avenues for intercultural engagement.