

To use a quote from its cover, “*Cross-Cultural Dialogues* is a collection of brief conversations between an American and someone from another country and culture”.

Several of these conversations (all in all, there are seventy-four of them) may ring familiar if you have traveled and conducted business internationally yourself. Each of the conversations consists of just a few lines of dialogue between two people. The dialogues themselves don’t explain cultures; to the contrary, they often indicate confusion, reflecting differences in assumptions that are causing misunderstandings between the parties. As such, the conversations serve as a basis for the author to explain the underlying differences, providing insight into cultural patterns and preferences.



Craig Storti, author of several books and a cross-cultural trainer/consultant, is on a mission with this little booklet: he wants the reader to start questioning what “completely natural” means, realizing that behaviors one might assume to be universal among humans may be no more than the collective patterns and preferences of one particular group or culture.

And he does a good job in doing so. *Cross-Cultural Dialogues* makes for entertaining reading. Like a good mystery novel writer, Storti first presents his readers with several baffling stories before revealing the “secrets” behind them. That will often have you flipping pages back and forth to take another look at some of the dialogues, which can be a bit of a nuisance. But it helps in keeping the reader’s attention.

Style and subject of some of the dialogues may seem a bit old-fashioned, but the issues they address are commonplace. Three main chapters sort the conversations by venue: social settings, the workplace, and the world of business. In a brief final chapter, Storti presents his “seven lessons”, an insightful summary of the most important cross-cultural learning points from the dialogues.

This book is good learning material for any-one working across cultural boundaries. Since that includes everything from traveling to faraway countries to working with colleagues who grew up in a different culture, *Cross-Cultural Dialogues* will be valuable for most of us.



Lothar Katz is the founder of Leadership Crossroads. He has a wealth of experience in achieving productive cooperation across cultures and driving business success on a global scale.

A seasoned former executive of a Fortune 500 company, he regularly interacted with employees, customers, outsourcing partners, and third parties in more than 25 countries around the world. These included many parts of Asia, e.g., China, India, and Japan. Originally from Germany, he has lived and worked both in the United States and in Europe.

