



## CULTURE 101

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo  
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas  
B.S. Medical Technology

Culture is the element that binds a particular group together. It forms the fusing component that distinguishes one unit from another. Inherently, every race, nation, minority or majority, has its own culture. It is the one thing that remains constant in one group, yet maintains a dynamism that makes the group unique.

We learn culture from many sources. As we grow up, we get exposed to the culture that our very own parents were exposed to. Our culture was handed down to us from our earliest ancestors and it is upon us to communicate whatever culture we have learned down through the generations. It is not upon us to question nor challenge culture. Culture simply is what it is and we can not dare have it any other way. We can not ask why something is so because the answer is always: BECAUSE IT SIMPLY IS.

However, modern thinking has caused us to break free from the bonds created by culture.

I remember the time when women couldn't leave the house in really skimpy shorts or see-through blouses. Everyone would frown upon such women, who get undesirable labels like slut, flirt or worse, call girls. Nowadays, we see women flaunting their figures and their legs in really short shorts. Well, maybe "flaunting" has simply lost its meaning in this case because nowadays, wearing shorts is a normal thing when a girl or woman wants to be dressed comfortably while outdoors. So they wear shorts of various lengths, depending now on self-confidence rather than on attaining a specific level of decency. One can not be labeled a provocative individual just because she wears shorts outside the home. Everybody does it already. Well, almost everybody.

Back then, boys and girls couldn't be seen together without a chaperon. Now, group dates are fine and when those groups break up into pairs, no one really creates a stir. Kids are given more emotional freedom and independence than my generation ever was.

Talking back was heavily frowned upon by our elders. You uttered a single word of protest and you'd be accused of rebelling or being disrespectful. Nowadays, kids are given a chance to have a proactive role in the way they are raised. They can freely express themselves by reasoning with their parents or explaining their side of the story. This is of course still with boundaries, but those boundaries can sometimes get blurry to the point of nonexistence. What's emphasized now is to try to get heard without sounding overly assertive.

Culture is reactive sometimes. It is in response to a current need or requirement for knowledge or behavior towards a stimulus. We can not totally reject culture but only use it as a guide towards living a civilized life.

### QUESTIONS OR DISCUSSION:

1. Define culture. What is it essentially in your own opinion?
2. What are the factors often encompassed by culture?
3. How is culture changed? Be able to cite examples as needed.
4. In your country, what aspects of culture have been dissolved completely?
5. Why is culture necessary?