The Importance of Self-Awareness

We all belong to different cultures, and many of our beliefs and personal habits are a result of our cultural backgrounds. In order to become more conscious of why people act the way they do, it is useful to understand that we all make judgements and comparisons on the basis of our own cultural beliefs!

The objective of this activity is to help your travelers become more aware of the traits that make them who they are, to help them understand how these traits may be the result of belonging to a certain culture, and finally, to help them start thinking outside of the box by asking why people from different cultures might have different beliefs, habits or behaviors.

**Step 1**: Give travelers the "Who am I" handout on page two and ask them to fill out the diagram with words that describe who they are or words they might use to characterize or identify themselves.

**Step 2**: Once the diagram is filled out, have them answer reflection questions 1-4.

**Step 3**: Ask them to find a partner and share one or two of the traits or identities that are important to them and why. Ask them why they think their answers might be different than their neighbor's.

**Step 4**: Take a look at the illustration below and ask discussion question 5.

**Step 5**: Have a group discussion. Ask for some examples of what they shared for questions 1-4, then ask discussion question 6. Try to make the connection between personal traits and preferences and how they might be the product of the cultures to which they belong.
Who Am I?
At the end of each line, write a word that you feel describes who you are or is a significant part of how you choose to characterize yourself to others.
Examples: Soccer player, female, American

Reflection Questions
1. Which three traits are most important to you?

2. Which of these traits are you most aware of? Least aware of?

3. Which one trait are you most proud of? Why?

4. Which one trait that seems less relevant to you? Why?

Discussion Questions
5. Which person in the cartoon do you relate to? Discuss the possible causes of the misunderstandings in the photo. If someone wanted to find out more about who you are, how should they approach you? How should they begin? What are the best ways to get to know you?

6. Now look back at your list of traits; which ones do you think are shaped by values of a culture that you relate to? How do you think these identities frame your view of the world?