

At the United Nations, it is common that different countries are encouraged to “socialize” the evening before they come together to do more serious work – such as trade negotiations. The idea is not only to break the ice, but also to gain familiarity with the other “country.” To that end, we are going to quickly recreate that experience with a goal in mind.

In just a few minutes, I will be dividing you into two groups and you will take on the personality of a country. I will visit each group and give you a set of attributes to act out, an identity as a country. Your job is to act out your role and to experience the other country so that you are able to “describe” them.

After I give you the descriptions, you will have a few moments to do some planning and then I will bring you together for just two minutes and have you interact. While you interact, please act out your part and observe the other country as you will be asked to “describe” the other group. The country that can best describe the other country will WIN!

Divide into two groups – send them to different corners and go visit each group individually – giving them the following to act out:

Country One:

- You speak loudly.
- You tend to make physical contact – close personal space, hitting one another on the back.
- You say things like “heck ya” and “you betcha” a lot.
- You have little personal space.
- You make direct eye contact.
- You ask personal questions.

Country Two:

- You do not make eye contact and tend to look at people’s shoes or over their shoulder.
- You prefer to talk only about business, not personal things.
- You keep a generous amount of personal space.
- If offended, you cough. If really offended, you simply leave the situation.
- You speak quietly.

Let them know to facilitate the exercise they should agree on something to trade within their country – like diamonds or coffee. Give them just a few minutes to plan.

Bring them together for only two minutes.

Have them sit down – start with the quiet country (#2) and ask them to describe the other group. Write down everything they say. Then have the loud group describe the first group – again, write down everything.

After you have gathered all the information... Ask the entire group if they know the difference between describing and evaluating. Describing is objective and evaluating is adding meaning or adding motive. For example, “so obnoxious” is evaluating, whereas “speaking loudly” is describing. Have the groups scrub their list before you tally the results to see who won and take off anything that is evaluative – most things come off the lists. With what is left, tally, then announce the winner.

Debrief... Ask people open-ended questions, such as... What do the results tell them about themselves? Are they surprised how much they judge? How does this effect their customer service? How might this effect their interactions or behavior? Did they know this about themselves?

Basically, the lesson is they should be amazed at how in a role play in just two minutes they added so much judgment and evaluation, what about REAL LIFE?

For similar activities, look at [Personality Color-Coding on RealityBasedLeadership.com](http://RealityBasedLeadership.com).