

INTERCULTURAL



COMMUNICATION

How can we define intercultural communication?

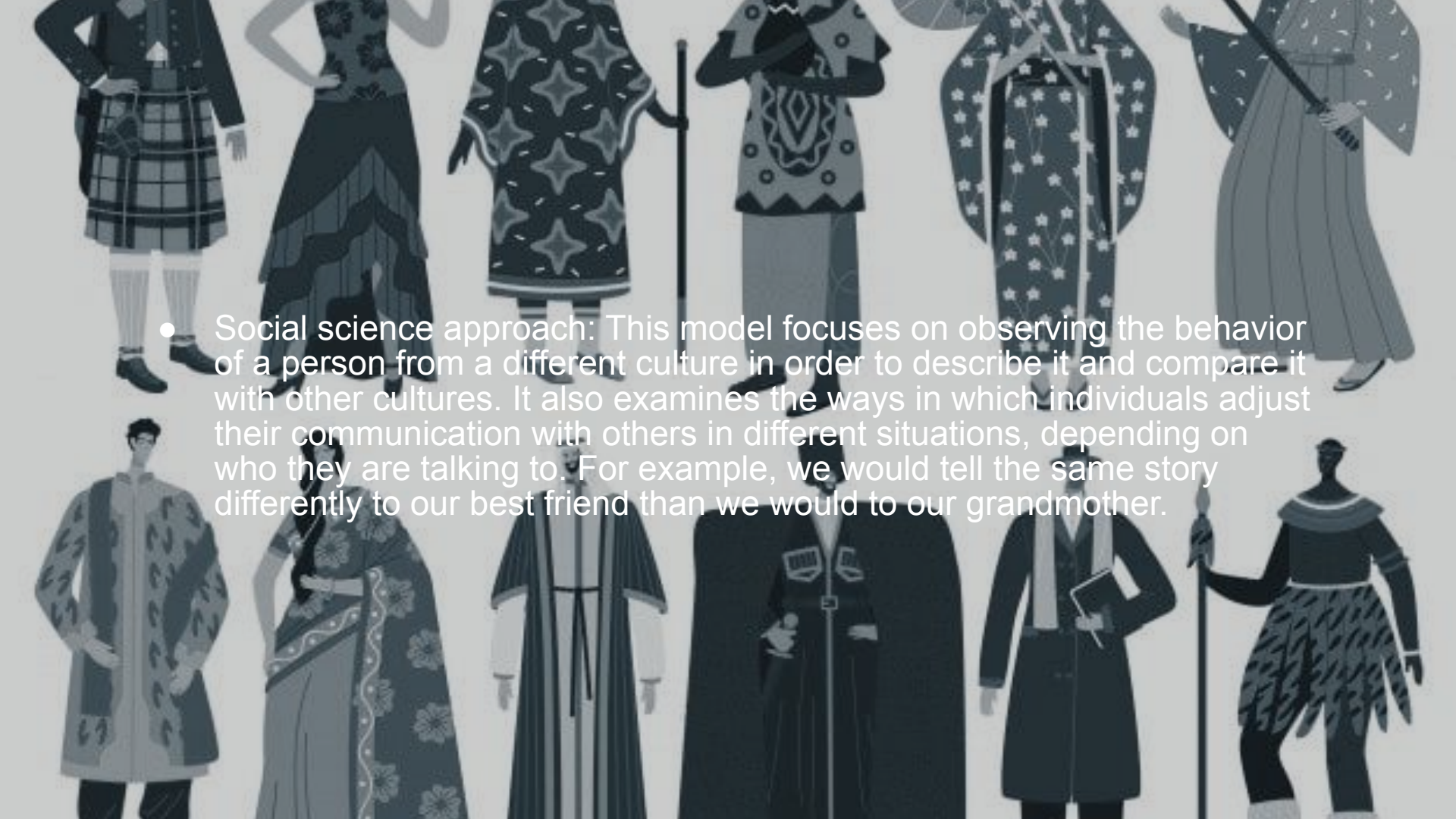
Communication essentially means communication across different cultural boundaries. When two or more people with different cultural backgrounds interact and communicate with each other or one another, we can say that intercultural communication is taking place. So intercultural communication can be defined as the sharing of information on different levels of awareness between people with different cultural backgrounds, or put simply: individuals influenced by different cultural groups negotiate shared meaning in interactions.




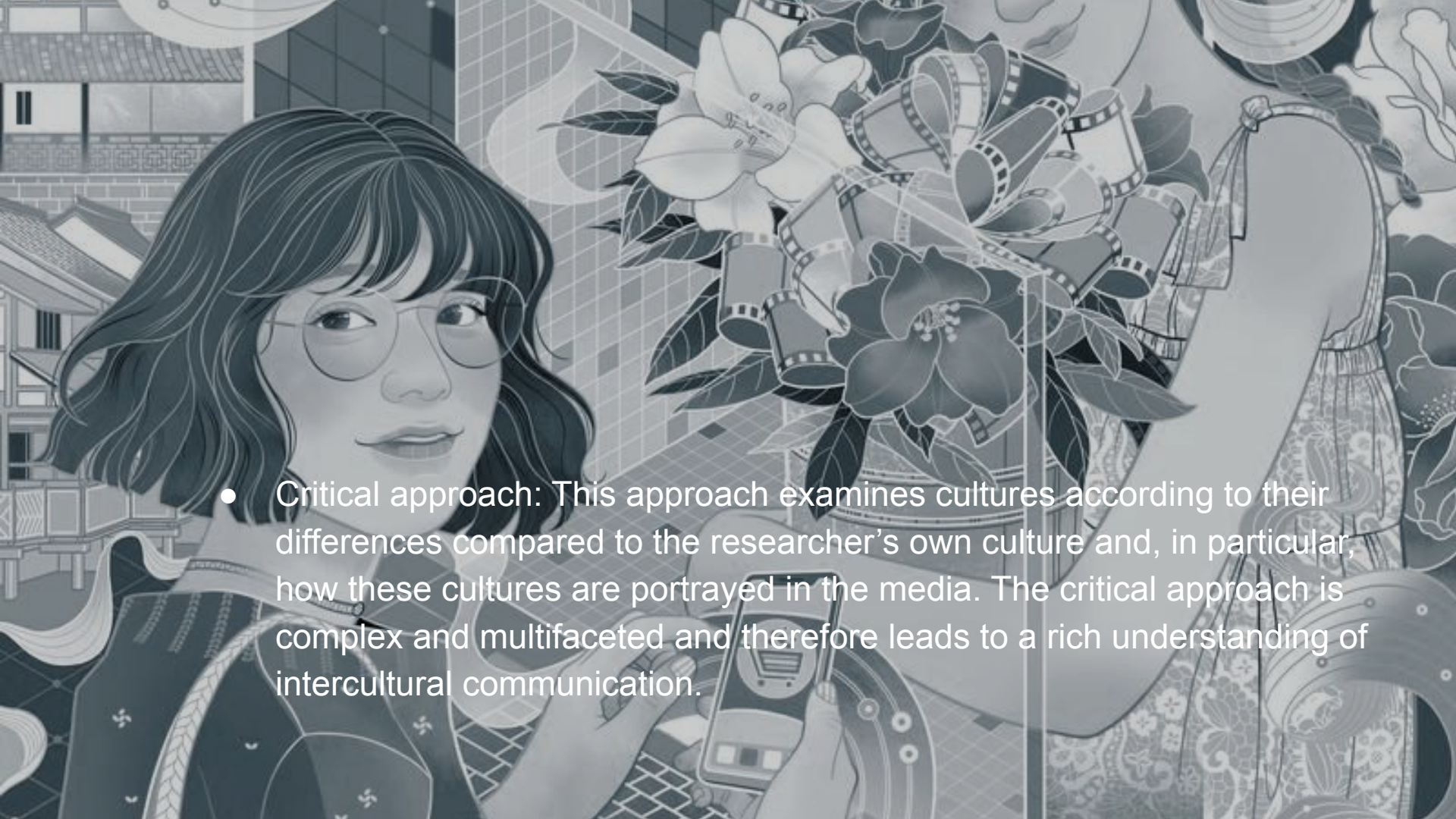
Intercultural communication theories

There are many different intercultural communication types and theories. The most important ones are:



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- Social science approach: This model focuses on observing the behavior of a person from a different culture in order to describe it and compare it with other cultures. It also examines the ways in which individuals adjust their communication with others in different situations, depending on who they are talking to. For example, we would tell the same story differently to our best friend than we would to our grandmother.

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- Interpretive approach: This theory focuses on accumulating knowledge about a culture through communication in the form of shared stories based on subjective, individual experiences. The main focus is on intercultural communication as it is used in particular speech communities, so ethnography plays a major role here. Because the individual context is so important for this model, it does not strive to make generalized predictions based on its findings.

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- Critical approach: This approach examines cultures according to their differences compared to the researcher's own culture and, in particular, how these cultures are portrayed in the media. The critical approach is complex and multifaceted and therefore leads to a rich understanding of intercultural communication.

What makes intercultural communication so important?

There are many reasons why intercultural communication is important. First of all, effective intercultural communication is an essential skill for anyone working across different countries or regions in order to establish harmonious relationships and avoid conflict. It is essential to accurately and appropriately transfer information across countries and cultures. Executives in multinational companies, working either in their home country or as expats abroad, especially benefit from great intercultural communication skills to engage with international clients and employees.

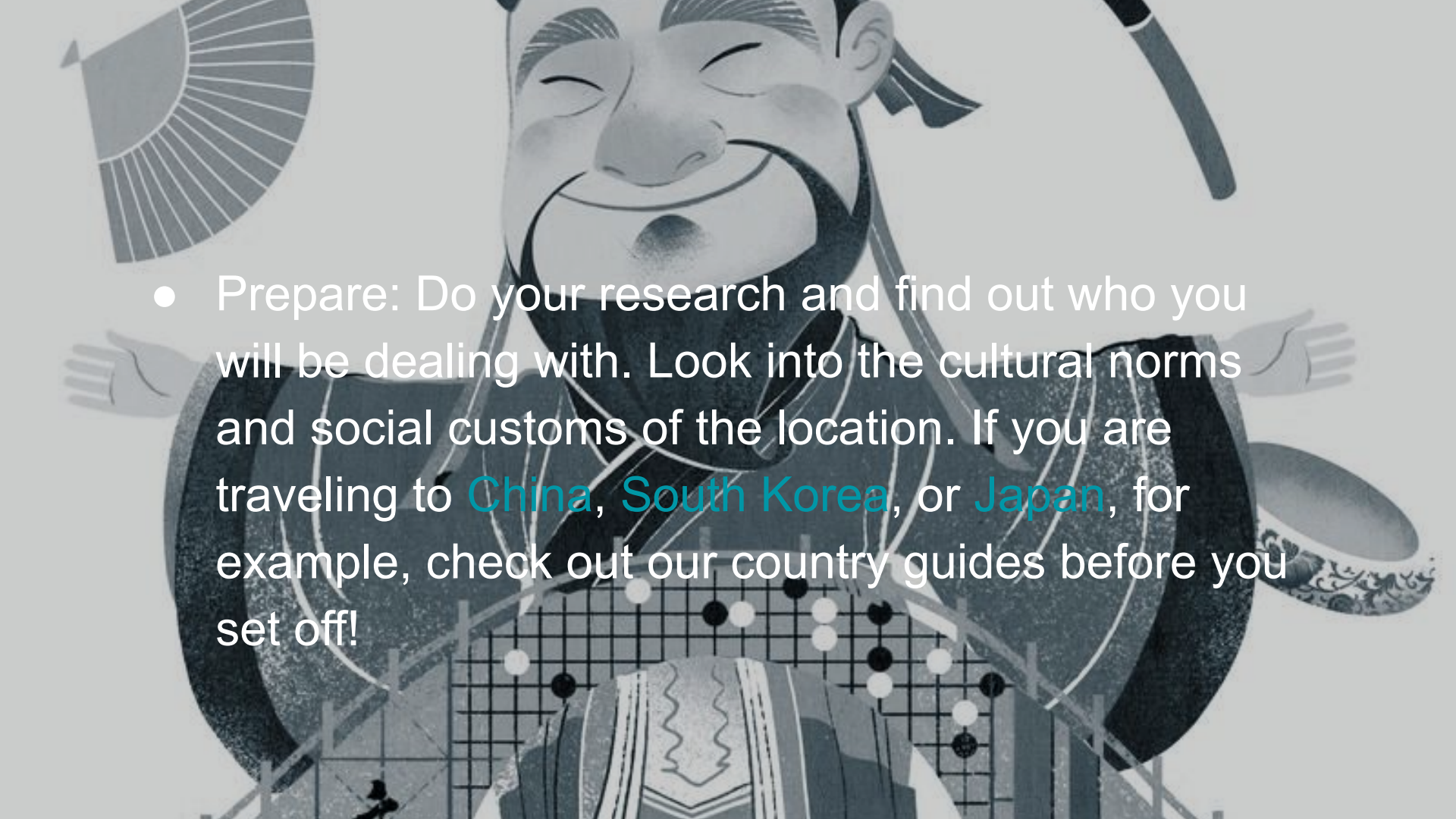
Similarly, intercultural communication is also crucial for anyone working with people from other cultures to avoid misunderstandings and even offense. It's fair to say that intercultural communication is the foundation for successful international business in today's globalized world.



An illustration of two hands holding a globe. The globe is decorated with various patterns, including a peacock butterfly, a beehive, and floral motifs. Musical notes are scattered around the globe. The hands are rendered in a stylized, cartoonish manner with orange and pink tones.

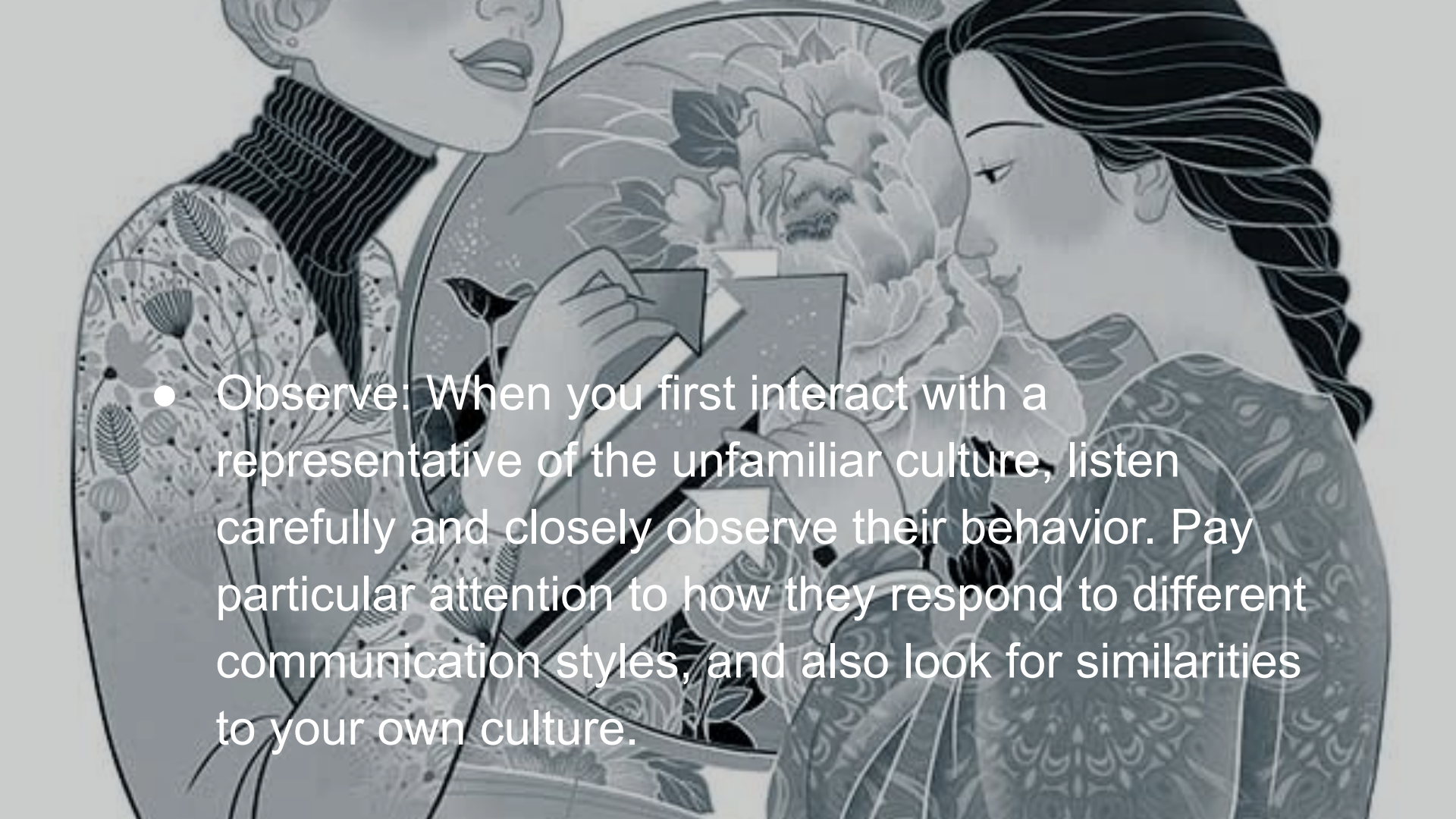
HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Apply these tried and tested strategies
to improve your intercultural
communication skills:

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- Prepare: Do your research and find out who you will be dealing with. Look into the cultural norms and social customs of the location. If you are traveling to [China](#), [South Korea](#), or [Japan](#), for example, check out our country guides before you set off!

- Learn the language: It will no doubt be a huge benefit and much appreciated if you show that you've made an effort to learn your counterpart's language. They will surely respect you for it, and this could boost your relationship.



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- An illustration in a monochromatic, woodcut-like style. On the left, a woman is shown in profile, wearing a dark turtleneck and a patterned sleeve. On the right, another woman with a long braid is shown in profile, wearing a patterned garment. In the center, a circular frame contains a large, detailed floral design, possibly a peony. Overlaid on this scene is a dark, semi-transparent rectangular area containing a white line graph with three upward-pointing arrows. A white bullet point is positioned to the left of the text.
- Observe: When you first interact with a representative of the unfamiliar culture, listen carefully and closely observe their behavior. Pay particular attention to how they respond to different communication styles, and also look for similarities to your own culture.



- Seek help: to coach you in the culture of your target country. You can ask them any question you like and draw on their hands-on experience.

