

Deep Culture Podcast – Transcript
The Deep Culture Podcast explores the psychological impact of intercultural experiences, informed by the sciences of brain, culture and mind. Join hosts Joseph Shaules and Yvonne van der Pol as we look at the personal growth that can come from travel, living and working abroad, learning a foreign language, growing up in a multicultural context—and the challenges of bridging different cultural worlds.
(Episode 27 – Are You a Global Citizen?)
Do you identify more as a global citizen than with a particular country or community? Is it possible to go beyond one’s cultural point of view? In this episode, Joseph Shaules, Daniel Glinz, Ishita Ray and Emre Seven discuss what it means to be a global citizen or to have a global mindset. Daniel—who has wide and deep intercultural experience—believes it’s not possible to be “global” since we can never fully go beyond our local perspective. And this is backed up by insights from brain and mind sciences as well. If so, then just what is a global mindset?

Time	Speaker	
00:00:00	Ishita	(Hook) You drive frantically to the airport, arrive at the ticket counter, throw your passport at the desk and ask for a ticket. And of course, you get the ticket. And then you live happily ever after...
00:00:25	Joseph	Hello, I am Joseph Shaules and welcome to the Deep Culture podcast, where we explore culture and the science of mind. And I am here with Daniel Glinz, a longtime podcast team member. So happy to be with you today. Greetings from Tokyo and how are you doing?
00:00:43	Daniel	Thanks Joseph. I’m doing fine. Greetings from Geneva where we had the same red and yellow leaves, as in Japan.
00:00:52	Joseph	Uh, you were just here, right?
00:00:54	Daniel	I was just in Japan last week.
00:00:57	Joseph	Well, welcome back to Switzerland.
00:00:59	Daniel	Thank you.
00:01:01	Joseph	As you know Daniel, one of the things we like to do on this podcast is dig into a topic, which may sound simple, but when you take a closer look, you find all sorts of complexity.
00:01:14	Daniel	Yes. Well, to start with, the word culture sounds simple, but the closer you look, the deeper it is. And this week we are going to dig into the question, are you a global citizen?
00:01:28	Joseph	And it was inspired by some research done by the Japan Intercultural Institute. Nearly a hundred intercultural educators and trainers were asked whether they identified as a global citizen more than with a particular country.
00:01:46	Daniel	Interestingly, there was a clear disagreement. In fact, there was nearly an even split. Half of these intercultural educators said they identified more as a global citizen than as a citizen of a particular country and half disagreed.

00:02:05	Joseph	So that does raise some questions. What does it mean to identify as a global citizen? Is being a global citizen an attitude? Can you go beyond the cultures you grew up with?
00:02:21	Daniel	Well, I'm rather skeptical of this idea of being a global citizen. When it came up in our brainstorming session with the other members of the podcast team, I flatly said that there is no such thing as a global citizen.
00:02:40	Joseph	And that was interesting for me because on the podcast team, you are probably the person who has the deepest and widest intercultural experiences. You worked with the International Committee of the Red Cross. You worked as a journalist. You've lived for years all over the world. You are multilingual. And with all that you have done, people might say that if anyone is a global citizen, you are.
00:03:08	Daniel	Well, I look forward to sharing my perspective on this.
00:03:12	Joseph	And what we'll see in this episode is that this split comes from different ways that people are interpreting these words. And that brings us to part one: The Big Blue Marble.
Part 1: The Big Blue Marble		
	Joseph	So, Daniel, let's first look at where the idea of being a global citizen comes from.
00:03:45	Daniel	Actually, this is a fairly recent concept. In the 1960s, Marshall McLuhan coined the term "global village" to refer to the ways that globalized communication was connecting people all over the world.
00:04:00	Joseph	And this was around the same time that the environmental movement was gathering momentum. For example, in 1962, Rachel Carson published this landmark book, <i>The Silent Spring</i> .
00:04:14	Daniel	And there were the space missions that also made people more aware of the fact that all humanity was sharing a single, fragile planet. In 1968, the Apollo 8 space mission orbiting the moon took one of the first photographs of the earth from space. It really created a sensation.
00:04:37	Joseph	Yes, that photo is called <i>Earth Rise</i> and it's a very famous image. You can see the earth just appearing above the moon's horizon.
00:04:46	Daniel	At the time, few people considered what the earth would look like from space, how beautiful it would look, how vulnerable and how alone.
00:04:58	Joseph	And interestingly, the astronauts hadn't even thought of photographing it until they saw it. And in fact, here's a recording of this very moment. The voice we hear is William Anders who is just struck by the earth's beauty.
00:05:19	William Anders	Oh my God, look at that picture over there, earth coming up. Wow, that's pretty. Do you that a color film Jim? Hand me a color roll quick. Oh man, quick just grab me a color. Calm down. Oh, that's a beautiful shot.
00:06:03	Joseph	And then four years later, there was another stunning photo of the earth from space, that most people have seen. It's called the Big Blue Marble. And when I was a child, there was even an educational television program called <i>The Big Blue Marble</i> . And its message was that despite our diversity, we all share the earth. And I in fact still remember the

		theme song, something like... “The Earth's a Big Blue Marble when we see it from out there, the Sun and moon declare, our Beauty's very rare.”
00:06:42	Daniel	Oh, what a lovely song. Joseph!
00:06:44	Joseph	<laugh>. Well, you can, well I don't know but if you want the original you can find it on YouTube.
00:06:51	Daniel	Well, having grown up in Switzerland, I was not aware of this song, but it seems to me that a program like this could be considered what today might be called education for Global Citizenship.
00:07:04	Joseph	And education for global citizenship has developed quite a bit since then and has been promoted by the United Nations.
00:07:14	Daniel	And if you look at the UN website, you can find the definition of global citizenship.
00:07:20	Joseph	Yes, it emphasizes responsibility to quote: “Act for the benefit of all societies, not just your own”. And it talks about promoting global citizenship by teaching students that quote: “they are members of a large global community and can use skills and education to contribute to that community”.
00:07:42	Daniel	And at this point, intercultural educators and listeners to the podcast will probably be on the same page. These ideals are something that it is easy to agree with.
00:07:55	Joseph	So, let's say that global citizenship can be seen as this positive ideal, something that people everywhere can strive for and there's not much to disagree about.
00:08:08	Daniel	There's one point I think is important here. The idea of global citizenship being promoted here is related to sustainable development goals that the UN promotes and that many countries have agreed to put into place.
00:08:23	Joseph	Right. It's not just a general attitude. Uh, as promoted by the UN. Global citizenship is about solving problems working in concrete ways to make a better world.
00:08:35	Daniel	Absolutely right. This is sometimes referred to as: “Think globally. Act locally”.
00:08:52	Joseph	So Daniel, I mentioned that you have extensive experience working around the world, including with the International Committee of the Red Cross. And what were you working on?
00:09:04	Daniel	Well, in short, our task was to see to what extent the International Humanitarian Law was respected by countries experiencing armed conflict and to make recommendations to the authorities so that they would comply with the law.
00:09:21	Joseph	And where were you working?
00:09:23	Daniel	I started in 1991. At the end of the first Gulf War, we were visiting prisoners of war in Kuwait. And later I was visiting persons deprived of their freedom because of an internal armed conflict in Sri Lanka and then in Kashmir and in Colombia to name just a few.

00:09:46	Joseph	So isn't it fair to say that you were doing the work of global citizenship? In fact, you have dedicated your life to helping solve problems that go far beyond your home country of Switzerland.
00:09:59	Daniel	You could say that, yet all these situations of armed conflicts were very local and I was working as an expatriate in these countries, but I don't think that made me a global citizen.
00:10:13	Joseph	Which raises the question just "what is a global citizen?"
00:10:18	Daniel	And that brings us to part two - I'm not global.
Part 2: I'm not Global		
00:10:31	Joseph	So Daniel, we first talked about global citizenship as an ideal, uh, this idea of acting to benefit societies beyond their own. And that sounds good. But still half of the intercultural educators in our survey do not define themselves primarily as global citizens. So let's take a deeper look at that.
00:10:52	Daniel	Well, I can understand why people hesitate to call themselves global citizens. For one thing, beyond having an interest in global issues, what does it mean to be a global citizen? Is being a global citizen an attitude? Do you have to travel the world to be a global citizen? Is there a kind of global mind that you're supposed to have?
00:11:18	Joseph	And, strictly speaking, there is no such place as the globe. There is no global passport. We're all citizens of only one or maybe two countries.
00:11:29	Daniel	Yes. And for me, citizenship is about doing and about participating in the affairs of the place you live in. I'm a Swiss citizen and so to be a citizen means I should involve myself with the local affairs of Switzerland.
00:11:47	Joseph	So if citizenship is about doing, then what does a global citizen do?
00:11:53	Daniel	Well, like we were saying, global problems must be worked on locally. And for me to make a difference, I have to focus on what I can do where I am right now.
00:12:06	Joseph	Right. So, if I stop using disposable shopping bags because I want to do my part to help the environment, it is a global concern, but I work on it locally.
00:12:17	Daniel	Exactly. And we may join an organization that works in many countries for example, but that simply means that there are many locals. There is no global.
00:12:29	Joseph	That is an interesting way to think about it. Global is a collection of many locals. What else could it be?
00:12:46	Daniel	Well, I think some people use the term global citizen in another way. They mean that they have somehow moved beyond their local perspective. Like saying, I'm not just Swiss, I am a global citizen.
00:13:04	Joseph	Yes. And half of the respondents said they identified as a global citizen more than any particular country as though being global somehow makes you less local.
00:13:17	Daniel	Well, that doesn't make sense to me. Most of us have grown up in one, maybe two or sometimes three or more different places. You have third

		culture kids who were raised in different contexts but still, growing up between several different countries is not the same as being global.
00:13:38	Joseph	Well, and there's something else too that's even more basic. You are a Swiss citizen and I'm an American citizen. We both have had the resources and the right passports to travel and work abroad, but not everyone does.
00:13:54	Daniel	Indeed. And this is a theme that Ishita Ray spoke about.
00:14:01	Ishita	<p>Recently, I was telling a friend about applying for a visa to travel abroad. To get the visa, I needed to show a letter of invitation, three years of tax returns, a bank statement of the last six months, a list of my financial investments and so on. Traveling from India to a quote unquote “developed” country, I'm often treated with a certain suspicion. I have to prove that I am the right kind of person, that I have the reason and the resources to be allowed to go. It's easier to be a global citizen if you have the right passport. And a big bank account. My friend recalled that his childhood image of world travel came from Hollywood romantic comedies where you suddenly realize that you simply have to meet this person who is in Paris or London, because you've realized you are in love. So, you drive frantically to the airport, arrive at the ticket counter, throw your passport at the desk and ask for a ticket. And of course, you get the ticket and then you live happily ever after.</p> <p>For me to be a global citizen, and I am more fortunate than many in my country, I must stand in a long queue at a crowded embassy, with no guarantee that my papers will be worthy of permission to travel. And of course, the reality is worse for a working class Indian, who might have put together all their life resources for the opportunity to work as a daily wage earner in an alien, faraway country so his family back home can have the bare necessities. If gaining a global perspective requires going off to see the world, then only a few privileged will have this chance. The majority of people in the world have never been on an airplane, will never see Paris or London. They are busy solving challenges of daily life, and yet they have rich experiences and community knowledge. We need to find ways to connect to them as global citizens as well.</p>
00:16:40	Joseph	It seems to me that the points Ishita raises creates a kind of dilemma. On the one hand, people might say that you don't need to travel the world to care about global issues. And that's true enough. But if it's a struggle to go beyond your local context, then the idea of global issues will seem really far away.
00:17:04	Daniel	It's not easy to go beyond our local perspective, even if we do have a chance to travel.
00:17:12	Joseph	Well, I know that for me, living away from United States has made me feel more American and not less.
00:17:20	Daniel	I would even go further than that. I doubt whether being quote unquote “global or international” is possible.

00:17:29	Joseph	So, what's your experience?
00:17:32	Daniel	Well, I have lived and worked for more than a year in different countries. I've been a student in the Netherlands and in China, I've worked as a foreign correspondent in Japan, China and Hong Kong. Later I was the delegate of the International of the Red Cross in Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, India, Colombia, Mexico...
00:17:54	Joseph	But everywhere you went, I'm guessing that what you needed was local knowledge.
00:18:01	Daniel	Oh, absolutely. To some extent, I became familiar with all these places, but I would never be considered as a local. And to do our work in the international committee, we always had to rely on our local colleagues who spoke the language and knew the local culture. I don't speak Sinhala for example. And my Hindi is very basic. I could never pretend to be a local in Japan, India, Hong Kong or Sri Lanka.
00:18:31	Joseph	So in that sense, going off to see the world can remind us just how local things are, how ignorant we are, and really how hard it is to blend in.
00:18:43	Daniel	Yeah, I remember coming home from China to Europe with a trans-Siberian railway in 1982. In China, I could more or less speak with everybody in Mandarin, but everybody immediately noticed that I was a foreigner. When I arrived in Russia, I looked more or less like everybody else, but barely knew enough Russian to change money or to buy a train ticket to Budapest. And when I arrived in Budapest, everyone looked exactly like me. People were wearing T-shirts and they were listening to Western rock music. But I was totally lost. I didn't even know how to say Switzerland in Hungarian. I felt like a total stranger. And yet if I just sat there on a bench, nobody would notice it.
00:19:35	Joseph	And language really is a big part of this, isn't it?
00:19:39	Daniel	Well, I'm fluent in German, English, Dutch Spanish, Italian, and French, which is my best language. My mother tongue is Swiss German. But I have absolutely no idea how the administration works in France, in Spain, in Italy, in Germany, or in the UK. I've never lived there. I speak Chinese and Japanese reasonably well. I can explain Confucianism, Taoism and the different Buddhist schools to a sophisticated audience, but I don't have the slightest idea how it feels to be a Japanese or a Chinese citizen. I feel like I have tiny bits of citizenships scattered here and there. But I don't consider myself as global, and I'm perfectly happy with that.
00:20:35	Joseph	So both you and Ishita talk about the difficulty of having a truly global perspective. And this is something that our podcast team member Emre mentioned as well.
00:20:49	Emre	I see some problems with the terminology of global citizen. The word global implies wholeness. Merriam Webster's dictionary defines it as quote "relating to or involving the entire world and of relating to or applying to a whole". But I feel wholeness is not possible in the cultural context. I work in Turkey with young people from all over the world. I'm

		an educator. But for me, the purpose of intercultural education is not to create a global identity or global allegiance at all. I think it is to recognize and accept the limits of your own understanding. It is by being mindful of our limitations that the possibility of other ways of understanding are opened up to us. And one other thing, I have seen some research, some studies that measure global citizenship of the individuals. So the question is, is this global citizenship something measurable? Are there people who are more global citizens or less global citizens? Personally, that doesn't make any sense to me.
00:22:23	Joseph	So, Daniel, where does all of this lead us?
00:22:26	Daniel	Well, how the words global citizen sound depends a lot on your starting point.
00:22:33	Joseph	We should also pay attention to where these survey respondents come from. More than 80% grew up in what we might call the West, especially Europe and the US.
00:22:45	Daniel	Well pretty individualistic and affluent societies. I think that makes a difference.
00:22:51	Joseph	I agree. And individualism for example, creates this tendency to feel that each individual is separate from others.
00:23:01	Daniel	And that means you can move to a different place or speak a different language and still maintain your unique self.
00:23:08	Joseph	Which I guess makes the idea of global citizenship rather attractive, doesn't it? You can feel that you belong to something large and noble and that you're not limited by a connection to a particular place.
00:23:23	Daniel	But that kind of individualism is actually quite rare in the world. Most people have a strong sense of community, they have a sense of a collective self. For example, as a member of an ethnic group or as a believer of a particular religion, many people feel very closely connected to the place they come from. The idea of belonging to the globe may not have much meaning.
00:23:51	Joseph	I agree. And I would like to get back to this question of whether being a global citizen is an attitude. We've said that there's no global, really the world is a collection of locals which we can never fully understand.
00:24:08	Daniel	And that leaves us with a question of just: What kind of attitude or mindset should we encourage as educators or trainers for example? What is our goal?
00:24:21	Joseph	And that brings us to part three - My Cultural Glasses.
Part 3: My Cultural Glasses		
00:24:41	Joseph	So Emre said that he doesn't think that it's his job to encourage a loyalty to some kind of global identity. And I get that.
00:24:50	Daniel	And yet he mentions research that tries to measure global citizenship. Is that even possible?
00:24:57	Joseph	Well, UNESCO does talk about measuring whether learners have acquired knowledge about global issues, uh, the interconnectedness of

		different populations of having a sense of belonging to a common humanity, and also things like showing empathy, solidarity, respect for difference.
00:25:18	Daniel	Well, I'm still quite skeptical about these slogans.
00:25:23	Joseph	Well, I do think ideals like this are important as a starting point. But let's get back to this question that Emre touched upon. Is it possible to measure attitudes like global citizenship or a global mindset? And what does that mean exactly? Does it mean going beyond our cultural point of view?
00:25:45	Daniel	It's probably safe to say that from the brain/mind perspective, we can never go beyond our cultural point of view. That would be like saying that we can go beyond our own mind.
00:26:06	Joseph	Because as we grow up, our mind is shaped by the patterns in our social environment. So just as we have a native language, we have a sort of native culture, which is our normal way of perceiving or looking at the world.
00:26:25	Daniel	Yes, the simplest way to say it is that humans are ethnocentric by nature. We judge things based on our previous experiences. How could it be otherwise? And we look at the world through our own cultural glasses. We always carry our cultural glasses with us. When we set out to see the world, we may get new perspectives, but we can't ever go beyond culture in an absolute sense.
00:26:56	Joseph	And brain and mind sciences can also help us understand why this is, because what we are calling ethnocentrism is not a single mental function.
00:27:08	Daniel	There are actually many different cognitive processes involved, many different biases.
00:27:15	Joseph	For example, humans naturally are biased towards the familiar.
00:27:20	Daniel	The familiarity bias.
00:27:22	Joseph	And we have a natural tendency to favor our in-group and to make in-group / outgroup distinctions, and to rely on stereotypes, and to ignore information that challenges our view of things, and to jump to conclusions based on limited information. And this list just goes on and on.
00:27:44	Daniel	And all these things are related to ethnocentrism.
00:27:48	Joseph	Fundamentally, our mind works through a process of predictive processing. We are constantly anticipating, evaluating, judging our experiences. We are reading the patterns in our environment and reacting to them intuitively. And all of that makes it hard for us to understand people's intentions, because our mental autopilot is simply unfamiliar with the terrain.
00:28:24	Daniel	So, it's no surprise that we can never really go beyond ethnocentrism any more than we could learn to speak every language on the planet. We will always be ignorant in a new cultural environment.

00:28:40	Joseph	But of course, it's also true that some people are more culturally skilled or aware, but it's hard to define just what that means. And you do hear all these competing terms like intercultural awareness, intercultural intelligence, intercultural competence, global mindset, global consciousness.
00:29:04	Daniel	It's hard to keep all these concepts straight.
00:29:08	Joseph	Well, I do think that there are two basic approaches, and one way is to define some single quality that you feel is the key to intercultural understanding. So sometimes you hear words like awareness or consciousness or intercultural sensitivity.
00:29:27	Daniel	Well, terms like that still sound a bit vague and idealistic to me.
00:29:33	Joseph	True enough. The other approach then, is to try and define these concepts in a more detailed way. I have heard it said for example, that intercultural intelligence requires “metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral factors”.
00:29:54	Daniel	So then it's not just one thing, it is many things or it has many factors.
00:30:01	Joseph	Exactly. So trying to define a global mindset can either sound idealistic and simple, but be vague, or it can be very complex and abstract.
00:30:14	Daniel	Well, I'm not an intercultural scholar, but I think if you can accept that some people see the world in a different way as you do, if you can accept, without judgment, that their values, their priorities, their ways of interacting are different from yours, then you may be considered as being culturally sensitive.
00:30:40	Joseph	So what is normal for you is not so normal for me. But that's okay.
00:30:46	Daniel	It's an understanding of your limitations that makes you a culturally aware person. Seeing the world is a lesson in humility.
00:30:57	Joseph	Indeed. And if we are open-minded, humble in that way, we may learn to look at the world through different cultural glasses.
00:31:07	Daniel	And that's not the same as going beyond culture. Rather, we understand that there are different normals, and that can help us navigate different cultural worlds.
00:31:19	Joseph	And that's what this podcast is about, isn't it? How to be cultural bridge people. Something we all want to be good at, no matter how we think about global citizenship. And I think that's a good place for us to end this episode. The Deep Culture Podcast is sponsored by the Japan Intercultural Institute an NPO dedicated to intercultural education and research. I'm the director of JII. If you liked today's episode, please spread the word on social media. You can also write us at DCpodcast@japanintercultural.org . Thanks so much to the whole JII team, our sound engineer, Robinson Fritz, and everyone else - Yvonne Van der Pol, Zeina Matar, Ishita Ray, Emre Seven, Ikumi Fritz. And of course, thanks to you Daniel for sharing this time with me. It's been great fun.
00:32:20	Daniel	Thanks Joseph. It was a pleasure.

