

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly in our culture

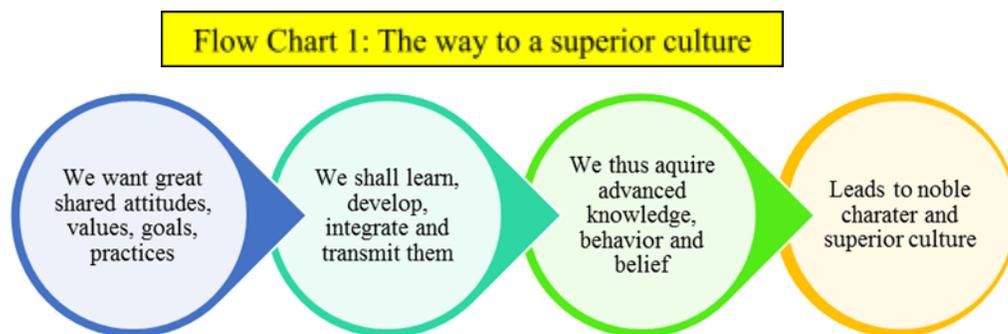
In identifying desirable cultural attributes, we will start from the end by looking at the objectives part of the Flow Chart 1: shared attitudes, values, goals and practices. If we were to start a movement to change the culture of the African or the Kenyan, we would start by setting out the objectives, which is to say: What do we want?

If an individual or a group of people deliberately agree on specific and shared attitudes, values, goals and practices as something to be attained (an objective), and the group sets out a set of activities that they plan to do, in this case to learn and develop about these objectives and to integrate them in their behavior and belief system, the group will achieve the character and therefore the culture they want.

The future can be learned, let us therefore go to work and identify some undesirable cultural attributes that we may wish to do away with and some desirable cultural attributes we may wish to acquire.

The exercise for identifying cultural attributes that are positive, and negative requires sincerity of the highest order. It calls for a deep look into the world, far and near, to find out about other cultures and with a genuine and honest attitude, reflect on lessons learnt throughout history.

If you are an African, this activity is important because no matter how hard we think and talk, until we do something, nothing will change.



The Bad: Undesirable attributes

Table 1 below contains some attributes of culture that people may consider undesirable. Let us go through the table carefully, reflecting on each statement. Do you recognize them in your culture? Are they the dominant cultural attributes in your community? Do they tend to define your group? Please add to the list in the boxes your own views on what other undesirable cultural attributes.

Good: Desirable attributes

Table 2 below lists in a random fashion the objectives under each category attitudes, values, goals and practices collected from many cultures in the world. Do you find this list containing some attributes that you would desire for your community at village level and even at national level? Do you find some of these attributes lacking in our communities? Which are the most important ones? If you would like to add to this list, please go ahead and add.

Following on the objectives, we shall look at the activities which would deliver our objectives. These include such activities as To Learn, To Know, To Develop, To Integrate And To Transmit all that we have learned and developed.

If you agree that there are some things which are missing in our individual attributes, or in the community, how wonderful it is! You have thus realized that we can learn them! You may feel frustrated and say, these things are too far removed from me, or from us! But just remember that the fact that you are reading this book means that you have gone to school and learnt a lot of things including a foreign language and culture. So, you can, and others can, learn these things.

Now turn to flow chart in Table 3 below. Therein lays gold! Everything else is good but only action matters. This chart shows actions which are based on cultural values, attitudes, goals and practices of people who act upon what they belief in. Read them thoughtfully.

The sum thought is this chart is that societies that belief in learning, and who develop things to support and improve life; people who take knowledge learnt over time and in other spheres of science and art, to integrate these multitude of skills and knowhow and create advanced systems; these are people who are foresighted enough to care for their future generation and to record and pass on to other people and their generations after them, these knowledge and developments. These are the cultures that own and control development and constitute leadership in finance and politics, and their opinions tend to carry the day!

Does your culture learn things, develop things, integrate things and transmit them? Perhaps we can rephrase the question: how far do you think contemporary Africans learn new things? And based on this new knowledge, do we develop systems that would improve our lot, integrating this new knowledge into other systems that have been developed by other people over the years past? How far does the African store knowledge and transmit the same to others and to future generations? The 'how far' is very important

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Table 1. Most Undesirable cultural attributes

Attitudes	Values	Goals	Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Get rich quick. ·Poverty is okay. It is fate. ·End justifies the means. Steal if you must ·Uta do? it is okay if you can get away with it ·Mediocrity ·Wacha kujifanya! Pulling back those who want to advance. ·Time is flexible ·Be clever about it. Fool them. ·Talk or bribe your way out of trouble. ·Justice is for sell. ·Everything/every one has price.. ·I am not good enough. ·Can't do attitude ·The educated are cynical ·The undeducated are resigned to fate. ·No self respect ·Nothing matters ·Complain without taking action ·Only I, Me and Myself matter. ·Toubles can be laughed away ·No need to worry. Survival is enough. ·Life is short, nasty and brutish. Today only. ·Life is not fair. ·The world owes me good life. ·Human right? what human rights? ·Public property is not our property. Mali ya uma. ·Nothing works according to plan. ·Visions are useless dreams ·Happiness belongs to others. ·Politics are dirty. Politicians are liars and thieves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Impunity ·Lies and deceit ·Inconsistency ·Land, cattle and property have more value than human life. ·Love for things. Materialism. ·Racism, tribalism, nepotism, favoritism. Kamwene ·Racial / tribal superiority complex ·Vandalism. ·Selfishness ·Corruption ·No value in organised, clean, tidy, better environment. ·No need to improve things ·Don't value hard work. ·Laziness. No need to try ·Short cuts. ·Adaptation for survival. ·No value in long term planning or any plans at all. ·Short termism. Vision is a lie. ·Limited freedom to no freedom ·People are to be used. ·Fear of trying. Fear of failure. ·Hate, fear & admire corrupt people, all at the same time. ·Jealousy ·Cynism. Cynical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·At local level, elites goals is to get power, weath and influence by all means necessary. ·At international level, elites just want to alleviate poverty, disease and ignorance for the rest of the Africans. ·Elites: Pursue personal advancement at the expense of society. ·Middle class: don't rock the boat. ·For the majority of people: No specific goals. Just live day after day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Cut throat politics ·Cut throat competition ·Corruption ·Lateness ·Poor governance ·Lawlessness ·Witchcraft ·Pull him down practices ·Not in control of our situation ·Vandalism of public property ·Begging for / expecting help in every needy circumstance ·Disorganised, dirty ·Adapt to every dire circumstance. ·Don't do anything

Table 2. Most desirable cultural attributes in the category of Objectives

Shared Attitudes	Shared Values	Shared Goals	Shared Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •We Africans deserve respect too. Let us earn it! •All men are created equal. •Working hard is godly and rewarding. •Obeying law is moral and honorable. •Corruption is immoral, destrutive and belittling. •Wealth, well being and freedom are good and are blessings. •People are more important than things. •We can do it. Do it better. •Take your best foot forward •We live to serve •Honesty is the best way home •We are responsible for our situation •We are our brother's keeper. Your security is my security. •A rich neighbour is a good neighbour •There is always someone better off than me and worse off than me. •We can be what we want to be. Work for it. •Everone is born free. Even the weak have rights. •Access to food is a human right. •Cleanliness is godliness •Leadership is a high calling. •No one kicks a dead dog. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Keep time •Love God •Respect others especially achievers •Aspire for greatness. Greatness is a result of effort not heritage •Control your environment and destiny •Every one deserves an opportunity •Results are more important. Work hard. •Cooperate. Create synergy. Harambee. •Competition is good. •Tell the truth, ashame the liar. •Be found faithful.Be true. Be honest •Take care of others and of this place •There is a better way...continous improvent •Be of service and you will prosper •Do not take that which does not belong to you •Freedom is worthy fighting for. Respect the constitution. and law •Everyone should enjoy life free of poverty, ignorance and disease. •Every one has a right to work and create wealth •Food security is national security •Education is key and never ending. •Never stop asking •Genious is in the balance-moderation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Attain universal respect and dignity for every African through hard work and good governance. •Take control of our resources, add value,produce things, create wealth and proposerity for all Africans. •Promote and reward education, research, innovation, enterprise, achievement, exellence and self-reliance in all spehares of human endeavor. •Build a free, democratic and law abiding country •Provide quality education and opportunity for all •Build a free, indipendent patriotic and responsible citizenry •Attain developement through hard work and fairness •Build a prosperous, well fed, healthy, secure nation. •Build a country free of tribalism, nepotism, favoritism, mediocrity, impunity. •Aware of diversity in enthicity, faith and color, build a cohesive kind caring trusting community of Kenyans / Africa. •Create wealth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Participatory democracy and multiparty party political system of governance •Devolved governance with a strong center. •Law and order •Human rights •Freedom of expression with accountability •Universal and accessible health care system •Universal and acceccible education system •Work hard. Reward hard work and exellence. •Equality, fairness and justice to all. •Servant leadership.accountable to the people.

Table 3: Most desirable cultural attributes in the category of Activities

