



**CULTURE PERSONA:
USA BASED ON ERIN MEYER'S
“CULTURE MAP”**

**MOST IMPORTANT TRAITS:
CONFIDENT, STARTS WITH A
CONCLUSION, WARM, CLEAR, FAST,
COLLEGIAL.**

ERIN MEYER'S CULTURE MAP

**YOUR CULTURAL BACKGROUND
SHAPES WHAT YOU PERCEIVE AS
NORMAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND
RESPECTFUL - AND YOU DON'T
NOTICE IT, BECAUSE IT JUST FEELS
LIKE REALITY.**



How the Culture Map works

Each scale runs between two poles. Where your culture sits determines what feels normal to you.

| SCALE | ← ONE END | THE OTHER END → |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 🗨️ Communicating | Low-context – say it explicitly | High-context – read between the lines |
| 📝 Evaluating | Direct negative feedback | Indirect negative feedback |
| 🧠 Persuading | Principles-first – prove the why | Applications-first – bottom line first |
| 👑 Leading | Egalitarian – boss is one of the team | Hierarchical – clear authority structure |
| ✅ Deciding | Consensual – everyone gets a vote | Top-down – leader decides |
| 🤝 Trusting | Task-based – deliver and I trust you | Relationship-based – know me first |
| ⚡ Disagreeing | Confrontational – debate is healthy | Avoids confrontation – harmony first |
| 🕒 Scheduling | Linear-time – plans are commitments | Flexible-time – adapt as you go |

**NO SCALE POSITION IS BETTER OR WORSE.
THEY'RE JUST DIFFERENT – UNTIL YOU'RE IN A
ROOM WHERE SOMEONE'S ASSUMPTIONS ARE
THE DEFAULT AND YOURS AREN'T.**





FROM THE BOOK

**MEYER'S DEFINING US STORY IS
"DEAF DULAC" - A FRENCH
MANAGER WHO MISSES HER
OWN NEGATIVE PERFORMANCE
REVIEW BECAUSE HER AMERICAN
BOSS WRAPPED THE CRITICISM IN
SO MUCH PRAISE IT
DISAPPEARED. THREE POSITIVES
FOR EVERY NEGATIVE: THE
CRITICAL MESSAGE VANISHES.**



**MEYER ALSO FLAGS THE
EGALITARIAN PARADOX: OPEN
DOORS, FIRST NAMES, FLAT
STRUCTURE - BUT "DON'T BE
FOOLED, THEY ARE MUCH MORE
HIERARCHICAL THAN WE ARE.
WHEN THE US BOSS SAYS MARCH
LEFT, AMERICANS CLICK THEIR
HEELS." AND THEN THERE'S THE
PEACH: WARM, EASY TO TALK TO
- BUT THE REAL RELATIONSHIP IS
HARDER TO REACH THAN IT
LOOKS.**



COMMUNICATING

**LOW-CONTEXT. EVERYTHING
SPELLED OUT, CLARITY IS A
PROFESSIONAL VALUE. WHAT
YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET - OR
SO IT SEEMS.**



EVALUATING

**INDIRECT. CRITICISM WRAPPED
IN PRAISE. THE CRITICAL
MESSAGE OFTEN DISAPPEARS -
AND THE SPEAKER DOESN'T
REALISE IT.**



PERSUADING

**APPLICATIONS-FIRST. BOTTOM
LINE UP FRONT, THEORY ONLY IF
CHALLENGED. THE CONCLUSION
COMES FIRST.**



LEADING

**EGALITARIAN IN STYLE - OPEN
DOOR, FIRST NAMES,
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY. BUT
WHEN THE BOSS DECIDES,
EVERYONE EXECUTES. MORE TOP-
DOWN IN PRACTICE THAN IT
LOOKS.**



DECIDING

**FAST. EGALITARIAN IN
APPEARANCE BUT THE BOSS
MOVES QUICKLY. GERMANS FIND
THIS SURPRISINGLY
HIERARCHICAL.**



TRUSTING

**TASK-BASED, DISGUISED AS
WARMTH. FRIENDLY
IMMEDIATELY, BUT FRIENDLY
ISN'T THE SAME AS CLOSE. THE
PEACH CULTURE - SOFT OUTSIDE,
HARDER CORE.**



DISAGREEING

**VALUES HARMONY. DISSENT KEPT
COLLEGIAL, NEVER PERSONAL,
ALWAYS A REFRAME NOT A
CONTRADICTION. OPEN DISSENT
READS AS A THREAT.**



SCHEDULING

**LINEAR. TIME IS A RESOURCE,
AGENDAS ARE RESPECTED,
DEADLINES ARE REAL. SHIPS ON
TIME.**



**→ WRAPS HARD FEEDBACK IN
WARMTH READS AS "COACHABLE"
AND "SELF-AWARE"**

**→ LEADS WITH THE CONCLUSION
READS AS "CRISP" AND
"INVESTOR-READY"**

**→ KEEPS DISAGREEMENT
COLLEGIAL READS AS
"COLLABORATIVE" AND "CULTURE-
FORWARD"**

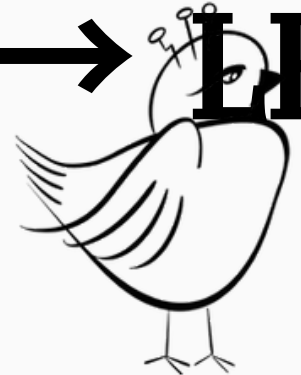
**→ FILLS THE ROOM WITH
ENERGY READS AS "VISION" AND
"LEADERSHIP PRESENCE"**



**SHE DOESN'T NOTICE HER
COMMUNICATION STYLE IS THE
DEFAULT - BECAUSE IT IS THE
DEFAULT. SILICON VALLEY DIDN'T
JUST EXPORT A PRODUCT, IT
EXPORTED A TEMPLATE.
MADISON GREW UP INSIDE IT,
WHICH MEANS SHE DOESN'T
PERFORM IT.**

**→ WRAPS HARD FEEDBACK IN
WARMTH READS AS "COACHABLE"
AND "SELF-AWARE"**

**→ LEADS WITH THE CONCLUSION
READS AS "CRISP" AND**



IN A VC PITCH

**NAILS THE FORMAT - GREAT
HOOK, THREE CLEAR REASONS,
WARM CLOSE. GETS THE TERM
SHEET. THE INVESTOR WRITES
"COMPELLING".**



IN A TEAM

**CREATES PSYCHOLOGICAL
SAFETY AND GENUINE WARMTH .**

**ALIGNMENT AND SPEED ARE
ALWAYS IN TENSION - SHE
ALWAYS CHOOSES ALIGNMENT.**





FROM THE BOOK

Meyer's defining US story is "Deaf Dulac" - a French manager who misses her own negative performance review because her American boss wrapped the criticism in so much praise it disappeared. Three positives for every negative: the critical message vanishes. Meyer also flags the egalitarian paradox: open doors, first names, flat structure - but "don't be fooled, they are much more hierarchical than we are. When the US boss says march left, Americans click their heels." And then there's the peach: warm, easy to talk to - but the real relationship is harder to reach than it looks.

THE 8 SCALES

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>COMMUNICATING</p> <p>Low-context. Everything spelled out, clarity is a professional value. What you see is what you get - or so it seems.</p> | <p>EVALUATING</p> <p>Indirect. Criticism wrapped in praise. The critical message often disappears - and the speaker doesn't realise it.</p> |
| <p>PERSUADING</p> <p>Applications-first. Bottom line up front, theory only if challenged. The conclusion comes first.</p> | <p>LEADING</p> <p>Egalitarian in style - open door, first names, psychological safety. But when the boss decides, everyone executes. More top-down in practice than it looks.</p> |
| <p>DECIDING</p> <p>Fast. Egalitarian in appearance but the boss moves quickly. Germans find this surprisingly hierarchical.</p> | <p>TRUSTING</p> <p>Task-based, disguised as warmth. Friendly immediately, but friendly isn't the same as close. The peach culture - soft outside, harder core.</p> |
| <p>DISAGREEING</p> <p>Values harmony. Dissent kept collegial, never personal, always a reframe not a contradiction. Open dissent reads as a threat.</p> | <p>SCHEDULING</p> <p>Linear. Time is a resource, agendas are respected, deadlines are real. Ships on time.</p> |

WHY THE ROOM WAS BUILT FOR HER

She doesn't notice her communication style is the default - because it is the default. Silicon Valley didn't just export a product, it exported a template. Madison grew up inside it, which means she doesn't perform it.

- **Wraps hard feedback in warmth** reads as "coachable" and "self-aware"
- **Leads with the conclusion** reads as "crisp" and "investor-ready"
- **Keeps disagreement collegial** reads as "collaborative" and "culture-forward"
- **Fills the room with energy** reads as "vision" and "leadership presence"

A founder who does the same things differently gets called cold, defensive, aggressive, or hard to read. Same moves. Different operating systems.

IN ACTION

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>In a VC pitch</p> <p>Nails the format - great hook, three clear reasons, warm close. Gets the term sheet. The investor writes "compelling".</p> | <p>In a team</p> <p>Creates psychological safety and genuine warmth. Alignment and speed are always in tension - she always chooses alignment.</p> |
|---|---|