

BUILDING CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCIES:

A key requirement for succeeding in the global legal arena



Presented by

Julia Karpeisky, JMK Contact, Inc

Paul Devinsky, Esq - Partner with McDermott Will & Emery LLP



Multitasking will take
away 6 more IQ points
than marijuana.

*“Can’t Get No Satisfaction,” New
York Magazine, Dec. 4, 2006*

NO BLACKBERRIES,
PLEASE!

What is Cross-Cultural Competency?



“Cultural Competency (or cultural intelligence)

is the ability to adapt, work and manage successfully in new ..cultural settings. Culturally competent people ..recognize that culture may impact the way people ..perceive the same facts. When several competing interpretations of a situation may be valid, they can place apparent contradictions in cultural contexts and deal with the ambiguity.”

Soon Ang et al., “Cultural Intelligence: Its Measurement and Effects on Cultural Judgment and Decision Making, Cultural Adaptation, and Task Performance,” *Management and Organization Review*, November 2007 (quoting Schmidt and Hunter)



What Happens if You Don't Pay Attention

- Financial exposure
- Loss of credibility
- Lost opportunities and time
- Extreme stress

**CULTURAL COMPETENCY
IS NOT OPTIONAL**



- Personal Relationships
- Understanding
- Communication
- Systems for getting things done (Approach, processes, resources)

KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS IN A CROSS-CULTURAL MATTER

Questions: Julia Karpeisky 202 857 9736,
juliamk@jmkcontact.com or Paul Devinsky 202 756 8369,
pdevinsky@mwe.com



TODAY'S AGENDA

- Have a good time
- Understanding
 - Why do we behave the way we do?
 - Why do we react the way we do?
- Personal Relationships
- Practical suggestions to improve your success through building cross-cultural competency

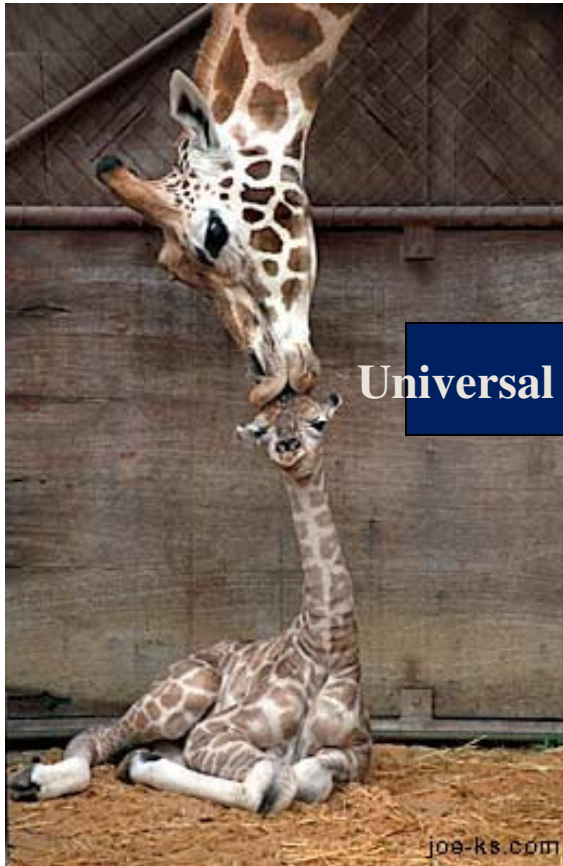
CULTURE AND BEHAVIOR



- **Culture** is the shared assumptions, values and beliefs of a group of people which result in characteristic **behaviors**
- **Behavior** doesn't always mean what we think it means

“You have to understand not only the words, but also the silence behind them.” Japanese saying

NOT ALL BEHAVIOR IS CULTURAL



Universal

Cultural

Personal





BLOCKS OF CULTURE

- Relationship of a person to oneself
- Relationships of a person to other people, society, rules and law
 - Universalist vs. particularistic cultures
 - Diffuse vs. specific cultures
- Relationship to time
- Relationship to outside environment
- Work-related values

What do you think you would do in view of your obligations to your **friend** and your obligations as a **sworn witness**?



- a. Testify that he was going 20 miles an hour
- b. Not testify that he was going 20 miles an hour

PARTICULARIST AND UNIVERSALIST CULTURES



CAR AND PEDESTRIAN

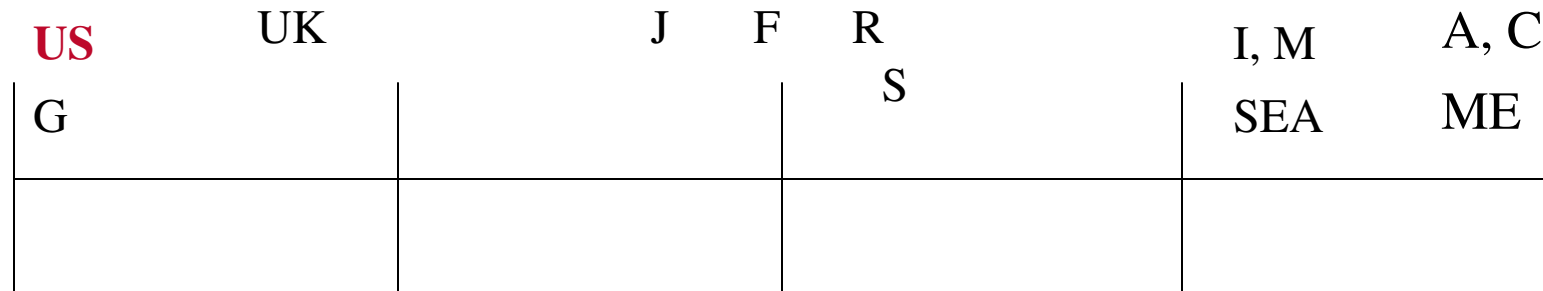
Percentage of the people in
various cultures who chose the
truth

Venezuela		32%
Russia	44%	
India	54%	
Mexico	64%	
Japan	68%	
France	73%	
Germany		87%
UK	91%	
USA	93%	
Switzerland	97%	

Source: Fons Trompenaars, Charles Hampden-Turner, *Riding the Waves of Culture*, McGraw-Hill, 1998, p. 35

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RELATIONSHIP TO SOCIETY



UNIVERSALIST

PARTICULARIST

A- Africa; C- China; F – France; G – Germany; I – India; J – Japan; M – Mexico;
ME – Middle East; R – Russia; S – Spain; SEA – Southeast Asia; UK – United
Kingdom; **US – United States**

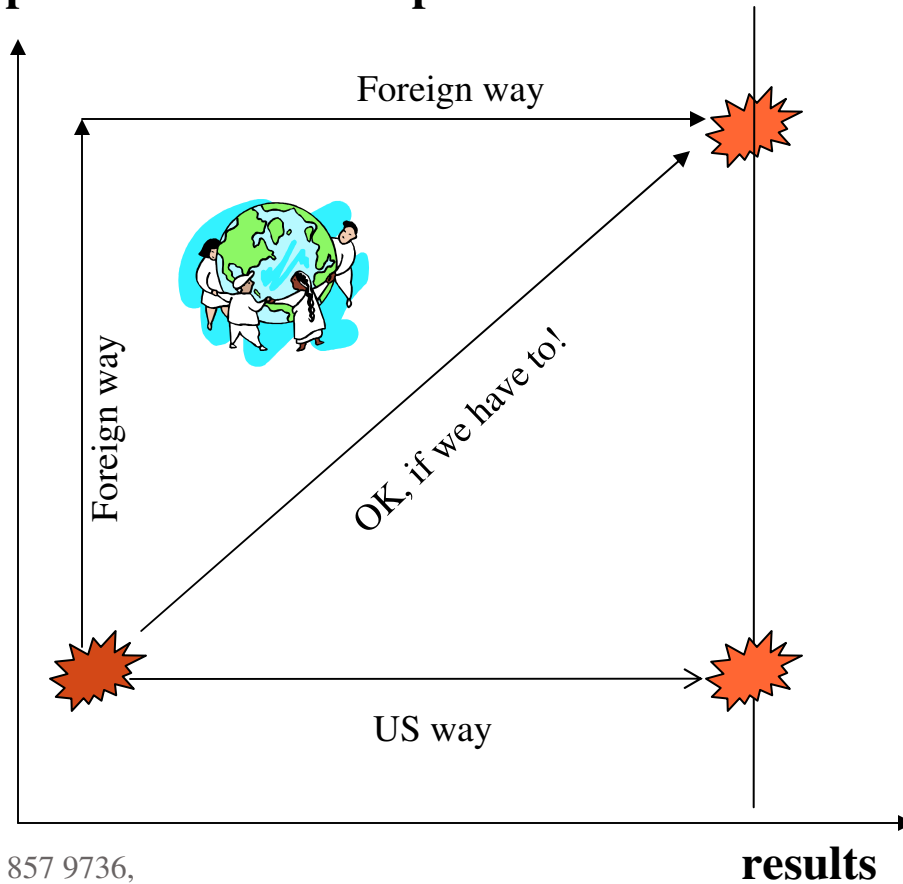
Source: Craig Sorti, *Figuring Foreigners Out. A Practical Guide*, 1999, Intercultural Press, Inc.

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PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN BUISNESS



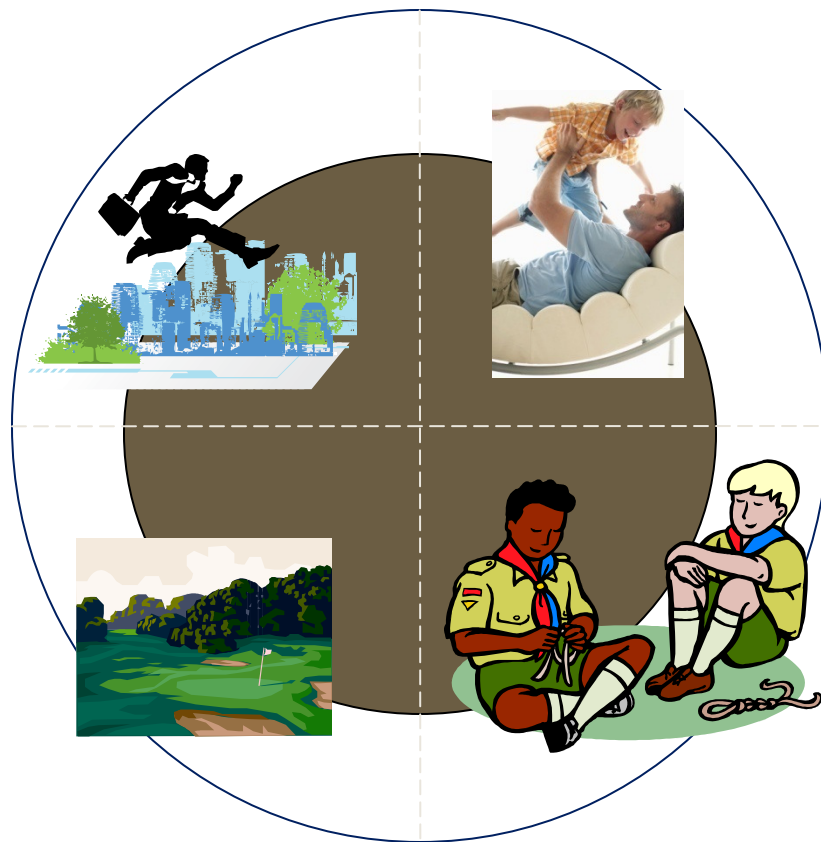
personal relationships



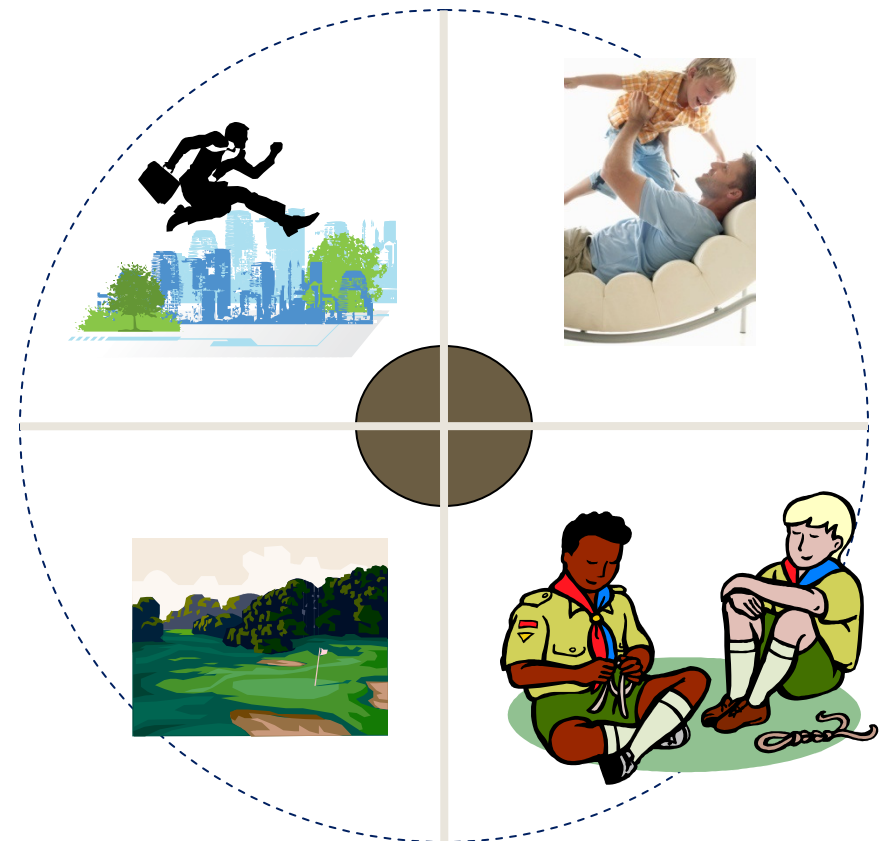
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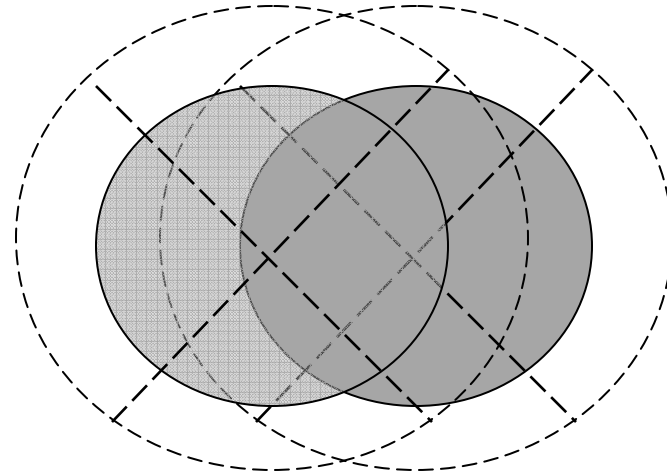
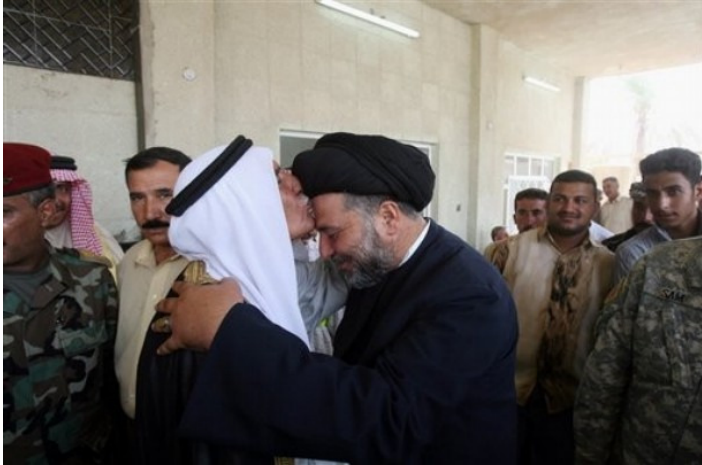
LEWIN'S CIRCLES

Diffuse

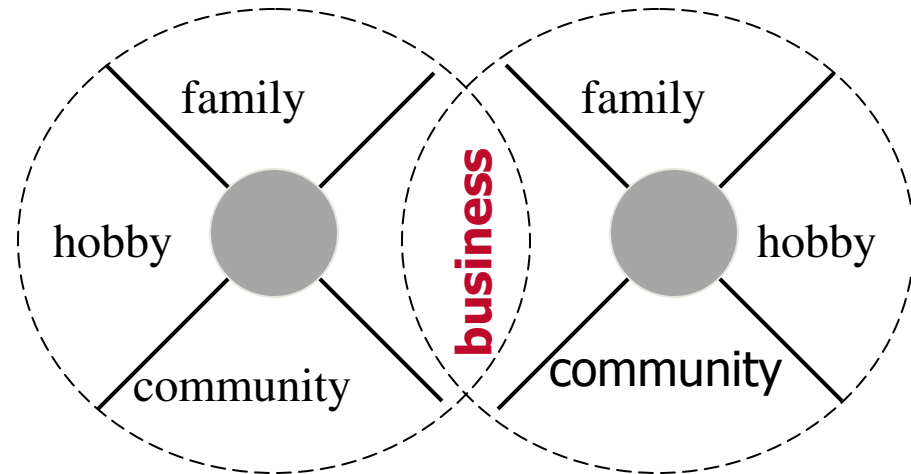


Specific (US)





Diffuse

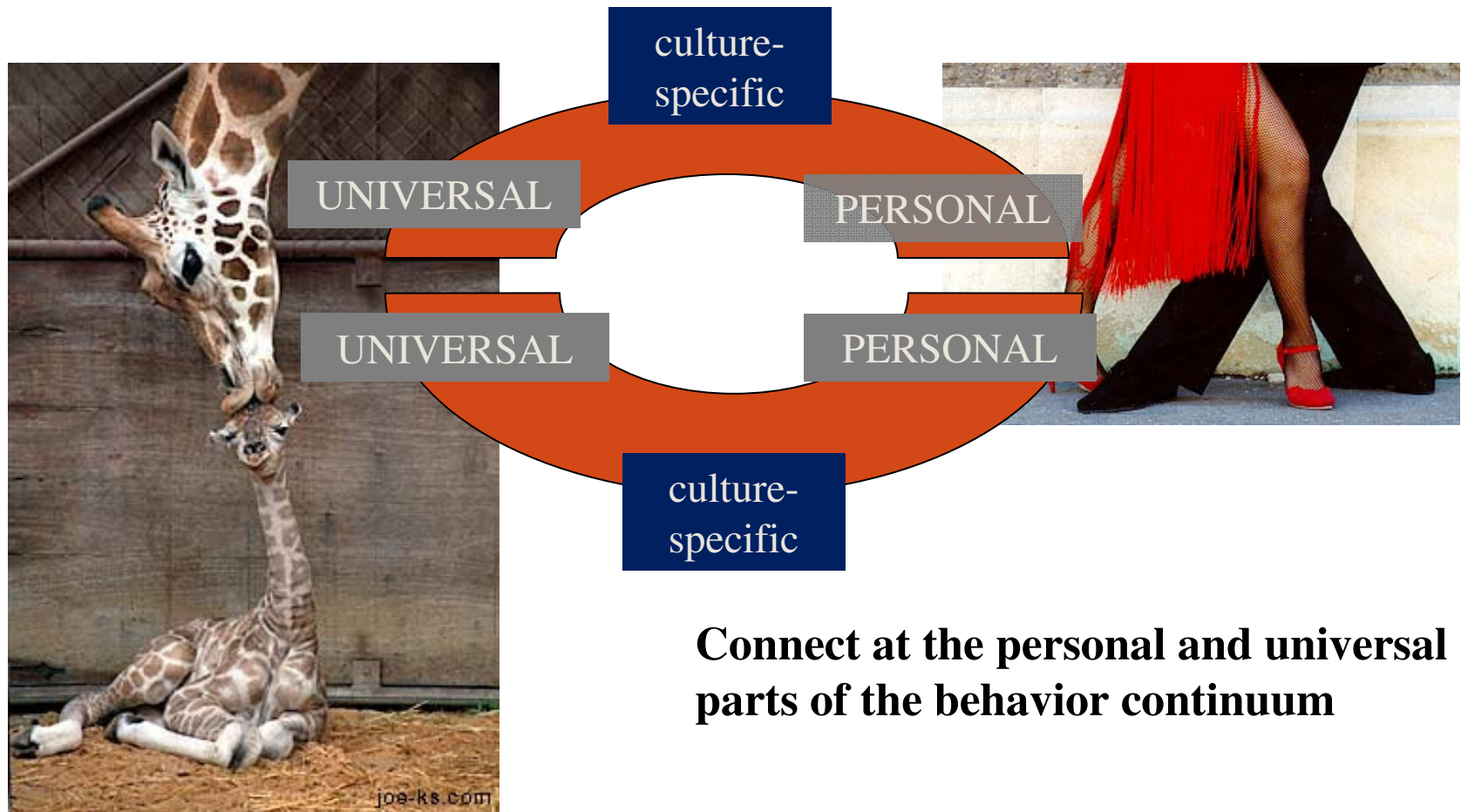


Specific

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

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pdevinsky@mwe.com

BUILDING PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS: Connection



**Connect at the personal and universal
parts of the behavior continuum**



BUILDING PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Engage in a low-consequence joint activity
- Connect at the universal and personal parts of behavior continuum
- Maximize face-to-face
- Use informal settings
- Connect through pain

BUILDING PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS:

with the help of a cultural intermediary



- Bi-lingual and bi-cultural
- Builds relationships for you
- Drafts correspondence for you in both languages
- Assures full understanding
- Back channel communication
- Based in the US and/or home country
- Stays in touch with your counterpart between the meetings
- Regularly scheduled phone calls



- Plays from the same sheet of music
- Interpreters
- Translators
- Cultural intermediaries
- Country experts

Keys to Success: YOUR TEAM



- I will not judge or make decisions until I am sure that I understand
- Time spent on building personal friendships is an essential investment
- I do not expect fast progress
- My goal is not to get through talking points; it is to establish true understanding

Keys to Success:
YOU!



FROM JUDGING TO LEARNING

Judging:

- You feel stressed, angry and frustrated
- “I am right and they are wrong”
- “I can’t believe he did that!”

Learning:

- What happened?
- What am I responsible for?
- What am I thinking?
- What are my assumptions?
- What am I feeling?
- What do I need?
- What do I want?



FINDING COMMON GROUND

- What are the facts?
- What do I want to happen?
- What are my needs and expectations?
- What are their needs and expectations?
- What are my choices?
- What else is possible?
- How can I address their needs first and still arrive at my desired outcome?



IN SUMMARY

- Cultural competency is NOT optional
- Behavior does not always mean what you think it means
- Personal relationships are essential when working cross culturally
- There are objective barriers to your ability to build those relationships
- Cultural intermediaries help build relationships and ensure seamless flow of information
- Understanding cultural needs of both sides helps you devise a strategy to effectively accomplish your goals

*All good people agree,
And all good people say,
All nice people, like us, are We
And everyone else is They.
But if you cross over the sea,
Instead of over the way,
You may end by (think of it!)
looking on We
As only sort of They!*
Rudyard Kipling
“We and They”



**We would be glad to answer
any questions or discuss any
comments you might have.**

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juliamk@jmkcontact.com or
Paul Devinsky 202 756 8369
pdevinsky@mwe.com

www.mwe.com • www.jmkcontact.com