'Even though I'm speaking their language, they're still rude to me'

Source: Milton J. Bennett, 'Towards Ethnorelativism'

Individuals at Defense experience cultural differences as more real than individuals at Denial. However, their experience is often stereotypical, coupled with negative evaluations – the greater the cultural difference, the more negative the evaluation.

Dominant-culture folks are likely to interpret Defense as an attack on their values (often perceived by others as privileges). For example, they may complain that immigrants or other minorities are ‘taking their jobs’.

Individuals from non-dominant cultures may experience Defense as discovering and solidifying a separate cultural identity in contrast to the dominant group. Here, Defense is necessary in the development of non-dominant ethnic identity to counteract the efforts of the dominant group to impose their culture on all members of a society.

A variation of Defense is Reversal, whereby an adopted culture is experienced as superior to the culture of one’s own.

Ethnocentrism
The experience of one’s own culture as ‘central to reality’. Beliefs and behaviours that people receive in their primary socialisation are unquestioned.

Ethnorelativism
The experience of one’s own beliefs and behaviours as just one organisation of reality among many viable possibilities.

WORD OF THE WEEK
Resfeber
(Swedish noun) You’ve been counting down the days, and now you’re counting down the hours. Your heart knows that it’s going on a journey and you cannot sit still as a result.

Resfeber describes the restless beat of a traveler’s heart before the journey begins, when anxiety and anticipation are tangled together.