



Connecting across Cultures: Turning Neighbors into Friends and Allies

Carol Paradise Decker

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Cultural differences can cause problems. In this book, the author details a workshop she conducted and the lessons learned in Vecinos (broadly defined as “neighbors”) experiences in New Mexico that addressed these problems. The themes explored were crucial: the power of names, the tri-cultural trap, culture and cultures, stereotypes, heritage, values, racism, communications, conflict, bridges, and more. Though the focus is on relationships, the implication is that these relationships will lead to action and alliances as everyone works together on community and individuals’ problems. Some of the text is “commentary,” introducing a theme or reflecting on some of its manifestations. Illustrative stories are sometimes included to add to the account. A large part of the book is devoted to quotations more or less intact, by individuals that reveal perspectives on some of the larger issues dealt with. Although there are plenty of resources—books, documentaries, articles, films—the author states that they must not substitute for contact with real people. Included also are many timeless tips about dealing with cross-cultural contacts. The author hopes that this book will help increase the reader’s awareness, comfort and effectiveness in their own intercultural associations, and lead to warm, enriching friendships for many years.

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