



CrossCulture
part of Richard Lewis Communications

Culture: Universal values do not exist – or do they?

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**Culture:
Universal values do not exist
– or do they?**

What do you think?

**Truth & Honesty
are suggested as examples**

Discuss these

Definitions of Truth

- **For a German or a Finn, ‘the Truth is the Truth’**
- **In Britain or Japan, it is all right if it does not ‘rock the boat’**
- **In China, there is no absolute truth**
- **In Italy, it is negotiable**
- **Give examples**

Values

- **Values & Notions of Values eg Honesty**
- **Diverse in Sweden, Indonesia, Uzbekistan**
- **Discuss**

Values

- **Truth, honesty, punctuality, honour, logic, common sense, sincerity, modesty & humility, good manners, courtesy, sense of humour, eloquence, thrift, work ethic, kindness, generosity, warmth, reliability, innovation, empathy, hierarchical respect, loyalty**

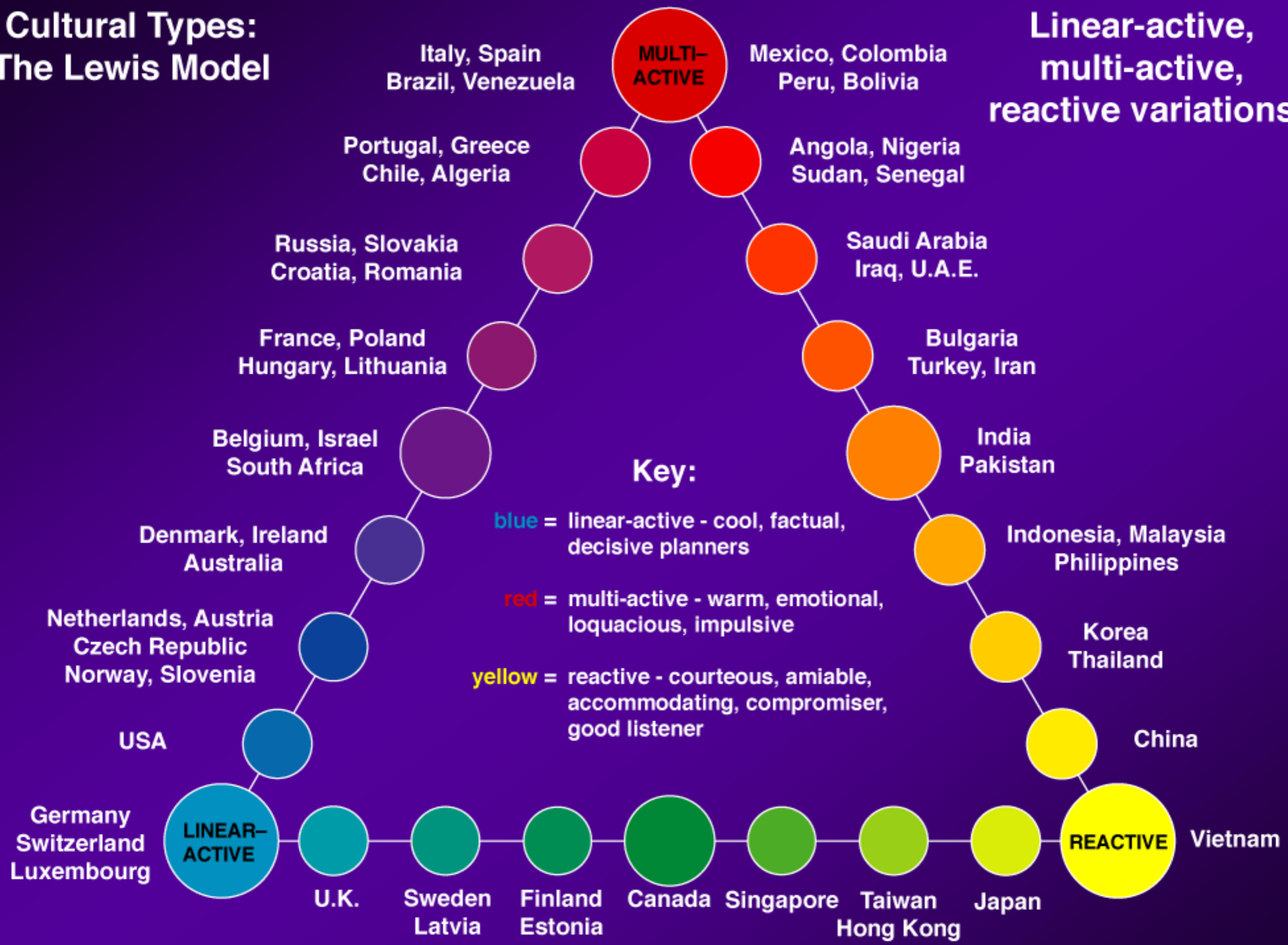
Values are affected by the characteristics of the tripartite cultural category to which you belong

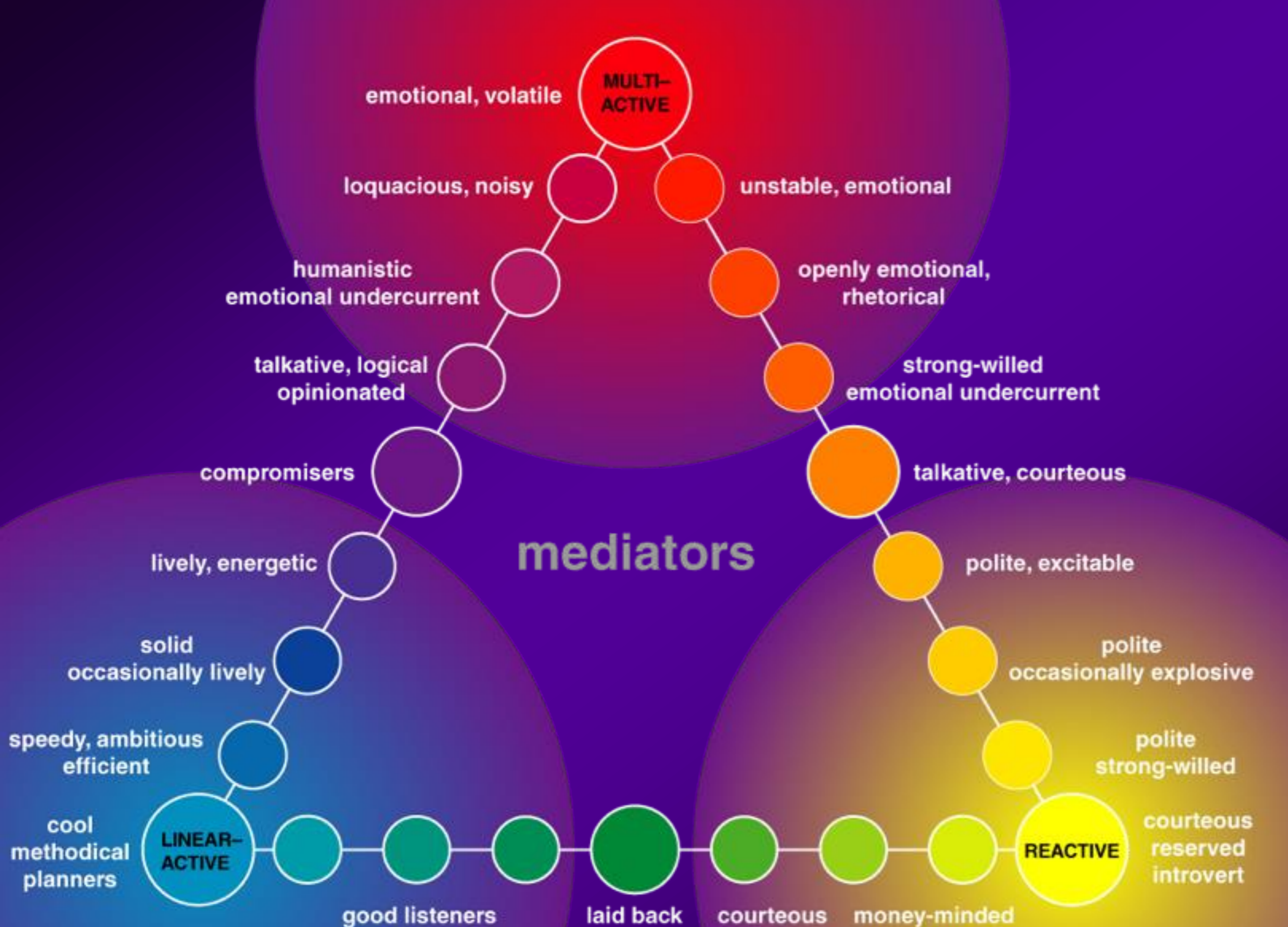
Cultural Categories

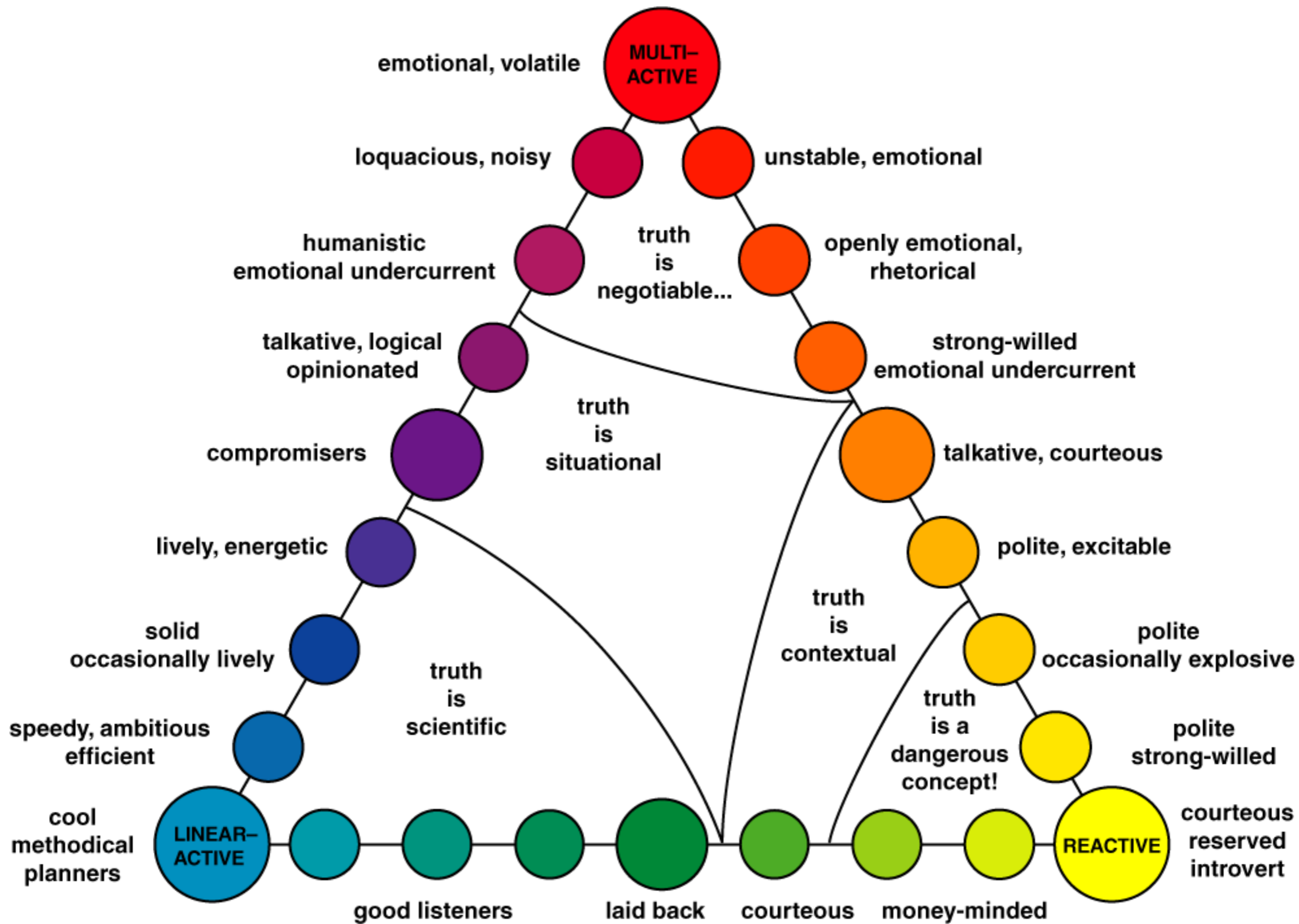
LINEAR-ACTIVE	MULTI-ACTIVE	REACTIVE
Talks half the time	Talks most of the time	Listens most of the time
Does one thing at a time	Does several things at once	Reacts to partner's action
Plans ahead step by step	Plans grand outline only	Looks at general principles
Direct	Emotional	Indirect
Partly conceals feelings	Displays feelings	Conceals feelings
Confronts with logic	Confronts emotionally	Never confronts
Dislikes losing face	Has good excuses	Must not lose face
Rarely interrupts	Often interrupts	Doesn't interrupt
Job-oriented	People-oriented	Very people-oriented
Uses mainly facts	Feelings before facts	Statements are promises
Truth before diplomacy	Flexible truth	Diplomacy over truth
Sometimes impatient	Impatient	Patient
Limited body language	Unlimited body language	Subtle body language
Respects officialdom	Seeks out key person	Uses connections
Separates the social and professional	Interweaves the social and professional	Connects the social and professional

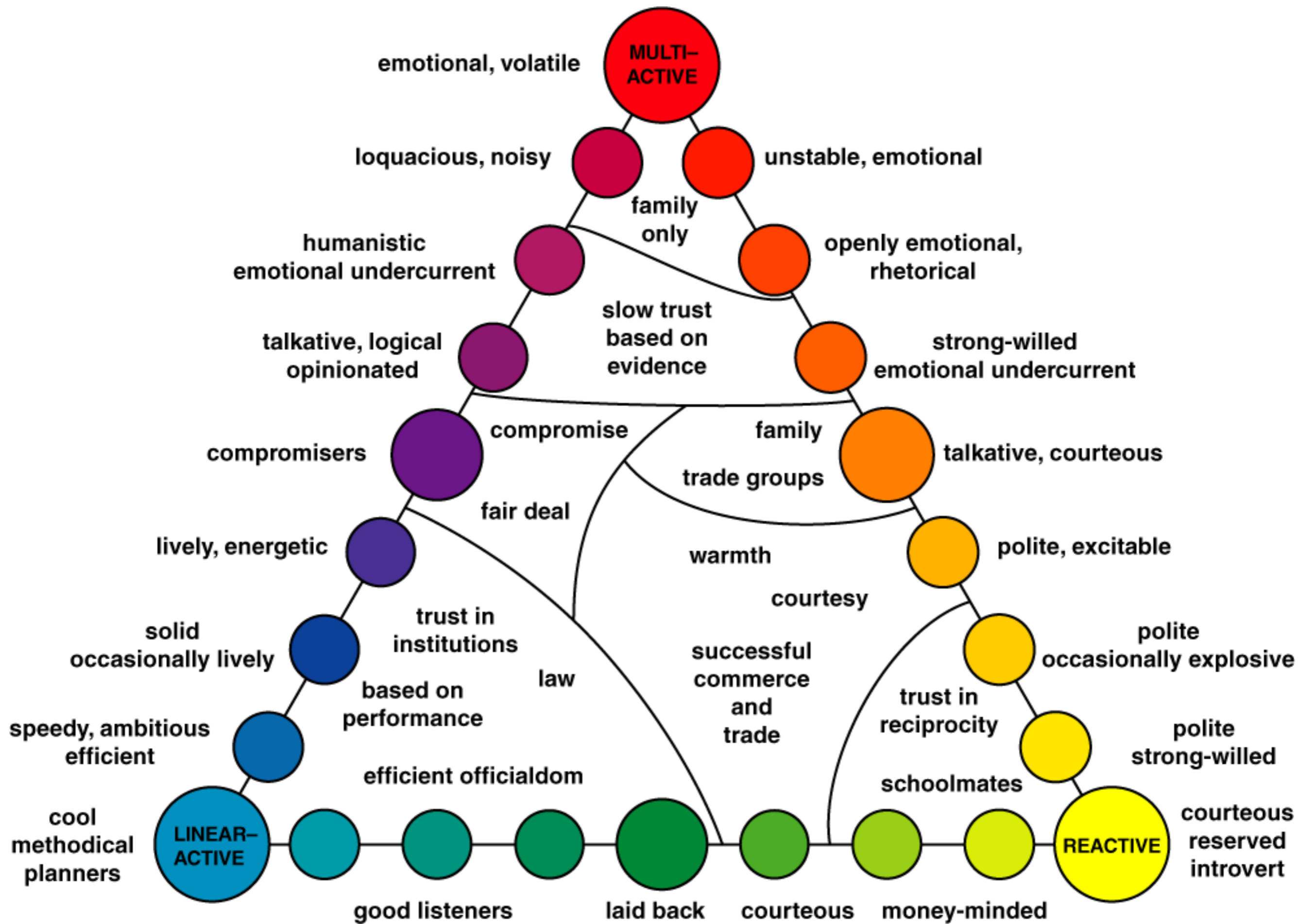
Cultural Types: The Lewis Model

Linear-active,
multi-active,
reactive variations









Nuances may exist with same categories

- **Reactive – work ethic, fairly standard**
- **Linear-active – money or Protestantism**
- **Multi-active – seasons or simply heat,
eg: Russia, Nigeria**

Work Ethic

Work Ethic

M

**uneven
climate-related**

L

**Money-related
Protestant principles**

R

**Automatic
Confucian**

Hierarchical Respect

Hierarchical Respect

M
strict
family-related

L

Flexible

R

Traditional
(Confucian)

Note – Linear exception - Germany

Punctuality

Punctuality

M
erratic

L
strict

R
strict

Note – in Japan, appropriacy more important

Reliability

Reliability

M

erratic

circumstantial

L

**Shown by word-deed
correlation**

R

**Depends on
other's**

behaviour

**Note –Germany, Finland &the UK are good
linear examples. Multi-actives often change
their mind. Asians mirror reliability of other
partner**

Honour

Honour

M
sensitive

L

R

Seen as out-moded **Basic, but**
often obscure

Note – Spain is the most sensitive (pundonor)

Poles are easily insulted

Russians, Turks, Arabs, Africans are in the
sensitive category

Kindness

Kindness

M

Open
Compassion

L

Adequate

but just

R

Protects

poor & sick

Note – Spanish obligation to give to
beggars

Arabs protect the weak

Linear people kind in different degrees

Loyalty

Loyalty

M

dependent on personal bonds

L

**Variable, may be
money-related**

R

**Variable
to company
or individual**

**Note – in Japan, to company, China to
Dept Chief, USA: weak, money related,
mobile! Italy: sentimental & unbreakable**

Sense of Humour

Sense of Humour

M
cynicism
common

L

R

Widely-used
(except Germany)

Does not
correlate with
West

Note – used in business, especially in
US, UK, Canada, Australia. Irony &
under-statement common.

Common Sense

Common Sense

M

often emotive

L

obvious

unemotional

R

essentially

practical

Note – notions of common sense vary enormously from culture to culture, esp Japan.

Logic

Logic

M

feelings intervene

L

paramount

R

East & West

have different

logical systems

Note – French logic is Cartesian (based on ‘givens’); Anglo-Saxon uniform & accepted by Germanics. East has different starting points.

General respect

General Respect

M

for reputation

L

for achievement

R

for seniority

Modesty & Humility

Thrift

Thrift

M

often defeated
by generosity

L

R

moderate

admired, esp

Sensible

in China

**Note – China, Scotland, Netherlands,
Switzerland notably thrifty**

**Russians, Americans, Arabs entertain
lavishly**

Good Manners & Courtesy

Good Manners & Courtesy

M

**generally
very attentive**

L

Understated, often

Rough-and-ready

R

courtesy

mandatory

Note – British believe they invented good manners. Australians & Americans have bad manners in British eyes.

Latins are solicitous, Scandinavians casual

Eloquence

Eloquence

M

very important

L

average, variable

sometimes suspect

R

less important

than politeness

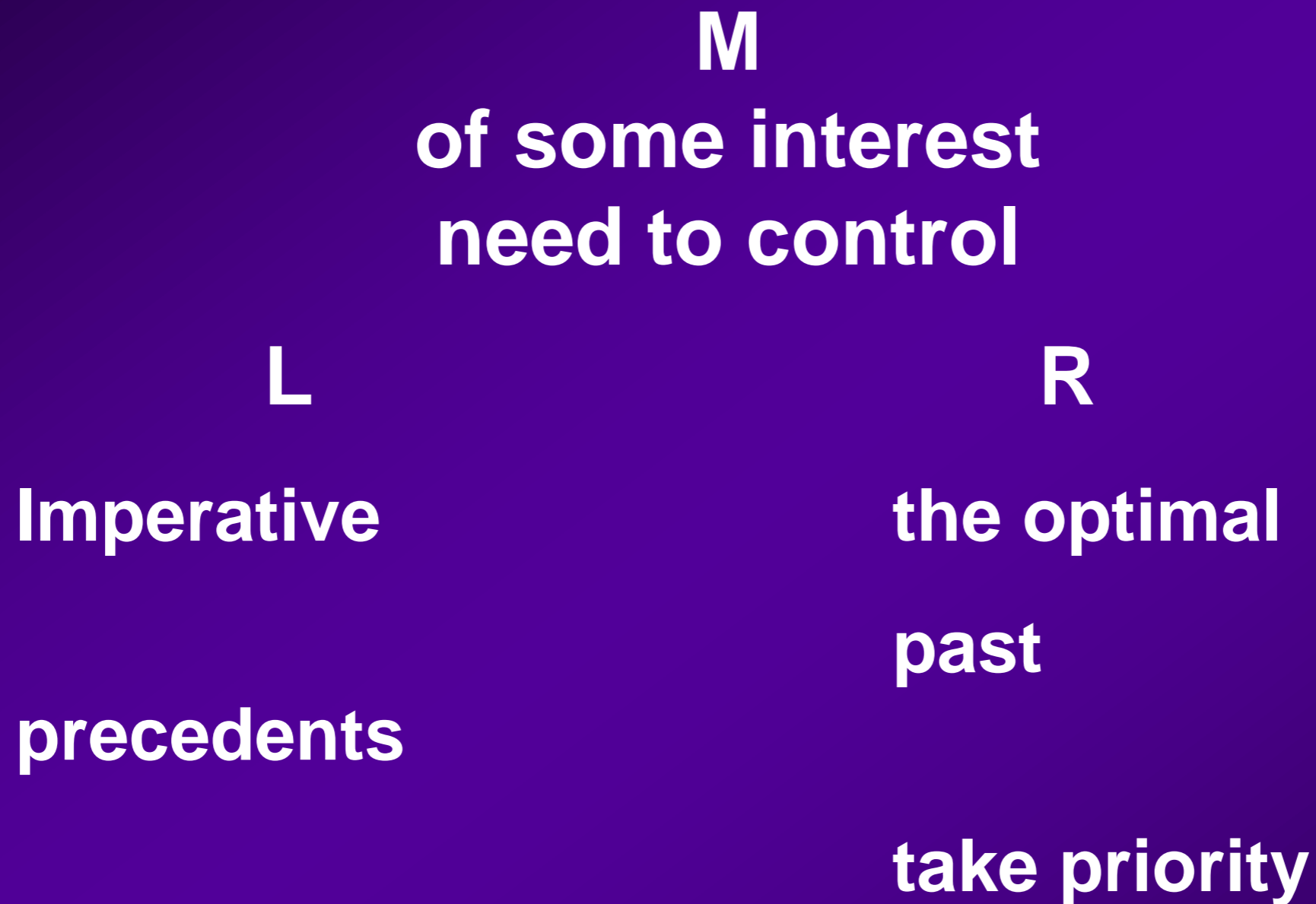
Note – Nordics & Germans are suspicious of over-eloquence

In France & Italy conversation is an art

The English are the most eloquent Anglo-Saxons

Innovation

Innovation



Note – The New World (& Finland) drives innovation. Asians generally reluctant to adopt.

Empathy

Empathy

M

highly valued

L

**Influenced by
practicality &
efficiency**

R

**common interests
carefully defined**

**Note – Multi-active empathy is eager.
Reactive approach it cautiously. For Linear
people it must be practical & workable**

**Are there any life-attitudes
that are universal?**

Eg: survival instinct

What do you think?

What about the following?

- **Love of children**
- **Wish to be liked**
- **Gratitude for favours**
- **Anger at injustice**

**Discuss the possible origins of
these life-attitudes**

**What about the desire to
belong to a group?**

Final discussion

- a) Are there any solutions to standardize values?**
- b) Is it desirable to do so?**