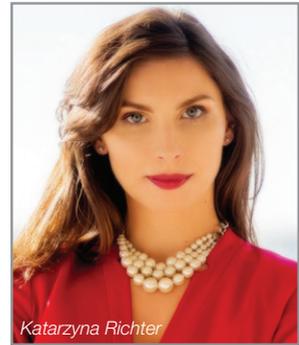


Cultural Intelligence During Ramadan



Katarzyna Richter

Katarzyna Richter shares tips on how to be culturally sensitive during the Holy Month.



The Holy Month of Ramadan can be very challenging for most non-Muslim expatriates. Not being able to eat and drink in public, especially when the temperatures are peaking at 50 degrees Celsius is a challenge. Restaurants and bars stop playing music and the usual hangouts open only in the evening. Even the pace of life slows

That said being observant, sensitive and respectful is the least a guest in a foreign culture can do. Use Ramadan as an opportunity to learn: talk to your local friends about what The Holy Month means to them, how it affects their lives, and how they benefit from it.

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down and so it takes relatively longer to get something as simple as registering your car or opening a bank account, done. Adopting a culturally intelligent strategy can help.

First off, you need to rid yourself of an ethnocentric approach. Stop judging your current environment from the perspective of your own culture or the way things are done back home. Display cultural sensitivity. Having decided to stay in the Middle East shows you are open-minded, so why not do it the right way?

Instead of complaining about why things are different, try to learn and understand the reason for the difference. Nobody is asking you to fast or follow the rules of Ramadan.

changes. Use this spiritual time to develop a particular skill, shape your body, reflect and meditate . . . become a better person!

If this culturally sensitive approach does not resonate within you, perhaps you should re-consider living in the Middle East. Ideally I would recommend a cultural intelligence assessment and a check on your ability to adapt before relocating.

Bahrain is one of the friendliest and welcoming countries in the world. Expatriates are treated with great respect and there are opportunities to create wonderfully balanced lifestyles. The least we expats can do is show respect to our hosts.

Cleanse. Love. Meditate.

Share your feedback with Katarzyna Richter via email: katarzynarichter@hotmail.com