**First question: Why do you believe, in the future, it is important to have sufficient knowledge of different cultural traits as a leader in multicultural teams?**

The competitive edge organisations can get from being good at tasks, and linear stuff such as managing data, production, logistics etc. is getting smaller, as many of these things can be outsourced to a computer and algorithms. As the world gets more interdependent, and multicultural teams are the norm, being good at people and relationship issues gets increasingly important. Young engineers being promoted to lead projects – ‘never again’…

**Second question: What made you interested in cross-cultural competence?**

I’m from a multicultural background myself – British, Austrian, Czech. Lederhosen. Studied language and literature, worked in radio, so interested in communication, character/values, meaning, symbols (semiotics – what symbols mean) human motivations. Then experiences in professional life (Pekka)

**Third question: How do you feel about virtual meetings and do you have any recommendations on how to facilitate virtual team meetings effectively?**

Gosh, a big question. Just worked on a 10 episode video course on this, out in autumn. Virtual is a linear medium (Italians), quite transactional. Define LMR. But as time goes on, people need to build people and relationship skills. Always important, but especially when team members may be feeling stress, uncertainty. Important to work on the human aspect – emotional temperature checks. Some may find it harder than others. Make time for social aspect (daughter – quizzes). Trello – virtual coffee breaks. Don’t be limited by default meeting times. Short bursts. Take advantage of breaks (Swedish/British example) Be aware of cultural concerns. Japanese partner example – questions to Zoom about making image sizes/positioning correspond to level in hierarchy. Effective chair. Choosing right medium for different messages. Communicate enough. People’s sensitivity. Words can hurt/heal. Honesty, authenticity, vulnerability of leader. Admit if you don’t know all the answers. Involve people. Swedes good at this.

**[follow up] Okay, and what about collaborations? Is there a difference? For example, relating to projects that are time consuming?**

Not sure I understand question.

**Fourth question: What is your best tip for future project managers?**

Invest time in putting yourself in shoes of other people, other cultures – in broadest sense. Frame your messaging so it speaks to them. Lufthansa example.

**Scenario: Young female project leader who has to give negative feedback to older male from a different culture/country.**

Depends on the cultures involved. Example of Finnish expert on berries, EU Presidency. Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, older men. Not easy. Calmness, matter-of-fact, be open about the challenge. Humble. Use some humour if possible. A bit of flattery. Don’t threaten their ego. However, what some airlines and other businesses where safety is a concern teach on how to challenge your seniors. 1. Are you sure? 2. I think we should do x 3. I’m ordering you to do x

How about them, and their own challenges? Do they think they are more linear-, multi- or reactive?