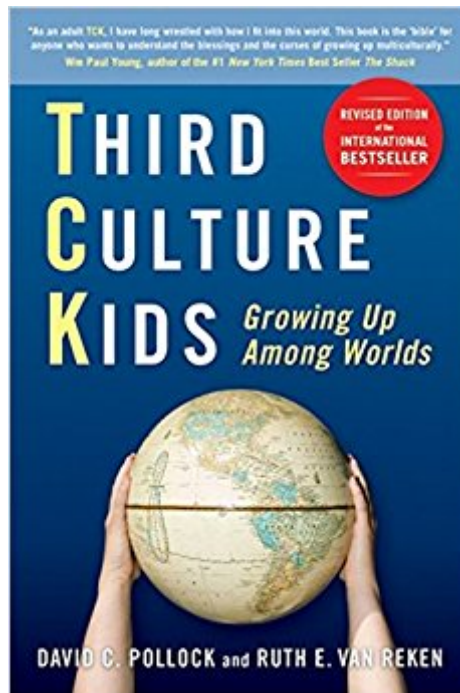




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Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds, Revised Edition



Synopsis

A Nicholas Brealey Publishing bestseller! Third culture kids (TCK)â "children of expatriates, missionaries, military personnel, and others who live outside their passport countryâ "have unique issues with personal development and identity. David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken bring to light the emotional and psychological realities that come with the TCK journey.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is invaluable for anyone who is or cares about a third culture kid (TCK): one who has "spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' cultures". This experience is common to children of missionaries, parents who work for international corporations, foreign service, aid organizations, educators, media representatives, military service, or whatever takes them out of their home country for an extended period of time. This TCK experience can also happen actually to children who remain in their home country but live in a different culture within it, e.g. those whose parents work on an Indian reservation in the U.S. while not being born to that culture. Many of the differences the reader would probably be aware of, such as differences in eye contact, handshaking, pointing and other mannerisms. I remember walking out of a training about Native American communication where we talked about the fact that direct eye contact can be a sign of disrespect to elders in that culture, and having a conversation with a young man who made no eye contact with me. My whole body strongly said "he's lying or hiding something" - not to be trusted. I could THINK all day long about those differences, but had to be sure to pay attention to

the responses my body was having and not react based on my ignorance. The authors of this book go more deeply into the effect these differences have on relationships, self-esteem, isolation, etc. Other issues addressed are, e.g. how does one form deep attachments with those around them when they know they are always separated eventually. There is no payoff and lots of pain in forming attachments. Another example of an unforeseen difficulty certainly is education.

The Third Culture Kid Experience is about those inadvertent pioneers in cultural unsettledness who have grown up in more than one and sometimes in quite a few cultures. They are the children of ministers, soldiers and international assignees and entrepreneurs. Unlike the adult who sojourns abroad or immigrates to a new land, their experiences of growing up in a culture or cultures different from their origins have affected them in the formative stages of their life where their sense of self is developed, the parameters of identity are set, and their relational patterns are established. As a result, third culture kids may acquire certain cultural coping skills far different from the skills those who lack such experience. They may become good interpreters of several cultures, skilled in several languages and rich in perspectives about the world they live in. There is a flip side to this, however. The same experience may contribute to rootlessness, restlessness, an uncertain identity and more than one's share of loss and grief. Incoherent social and educational experiences may create personal and mental gaps. Uncertain loyalties and eccentric relationship patterns may result. Pollock and Van Reken have essentially broken new ground in this book. Not only is there scant literature on this phenomenon, but what exists is fragmentary. Here the authors have coherently brought the dimensions of The Third Culture Kid Experience together in one place. The book is first and foremost a gift to such individuals who have often puzzled themselves with their own seemingly unique experiences and the disjointedness they have experienced. Here they read about who they are and meet fellows like themselves.

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