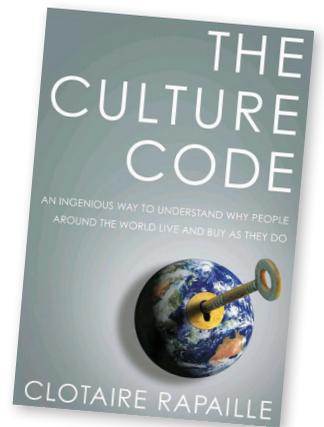




# An Interview with Dr. Clotaire Rapaille on the Culture Code, Part Two



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**H**ere is the second installment of our interview with Dr. Clotaire Rapaille, who wrote the New York Times best seller *The Culture Code*. In part one of the interview (QRCA VIEWS Spring 2017), Dr. Rapaille describes what the Culture Code is and how it can be applied to gain a deep understanding of consumers' emotions based on their earliest experiences with a category. Here he describes how to apply the Code to gain a reading on people's true needs in today's multi-cultural world.

**Kay:** What are your thoughts on how to use the Culture Code to explain Donald Trump's victory in the U.S. Presidential election?

**CR:** Trump triggered the reptilian brain, and the number one issue, very simply, is

immigration. Why? It's people breaking into your home and attacking your family and whatever the image is. Perception is reality here. We need somebody who will take us away from this place where we are invaded. Where is the Promised Land? Donald Trump says, "Let's make America great again." That's the America we want to go to. That's the Promised Land. And he says, "Follow me." Why me? Okay. I'm crazy, this is clear, but follow me.

The structure is the message. The content is irrelevant. And what is the structure? "I am Moses! I'm going to take you to the Promised Land. I'm going to recreate America, and it's going to be great again. We're going to be respected in the world. We're going to be feared. We're not going to be apologizing to everyone." His attitude

is what made him president. "You beat me, and I'm going to beat you five times stronger back. You punch me; I punch you back three times, five times stronger."

Suddenly, that's what appeals to Americans. This is what we want.

A lot of people have predicted that Trump is going to change. Well, I don't think he's going to change. His structure is so strong. And even today, people say, "Oh, he's going to stop tweeting." No, he's not. It doesn't matter. He is who he is. The big issue was just be yourself and you're going to win. So that's what makes him so strong.

Hillary, unfortunately, had too many advisors, and so it was difficult for her to be constant in one direction or another. And she was not Moses.

**Kay:** How do you reconcile globalization with the Code?

**CR:** There is a global code that is happening because there is a global tribe. I just wrote a book on this. The global tribe is what I call "the satellite tribe," which is made up of people who are always on the move, always flying from one place to another, frequent flyers. They're always benchmarking everything in the world, where are the best places to do this or that. They speak three different languages and have homes in three different parts of the world. These people are what the media



have recently come to call “the elite.” But they are out of touch with the real culture.

For the real people who live in the U.S. Midwest in Akron, Ohio, or Laredo, Texas, the culture code is becoming even stronger because these people see their culture as a refuge and something that is in danger. And when your culture is in danger, you’re ready to fight for it. This is what is happening in the U.S. and in England with Brexit. This is what is happening in Germany today. This is what is happening in France and around the world. Real everyday people today are saying, “Wow, I want to keep my identity. I want to be who I am. I want to connect with my deep emotional culture and my deep emotions.”

So what is happening with the Culture Code is the distance between these two groups is going to get bigger and bigger and bigger in the future. They are going to be more and more disconnected.

This is a very big issue because most of the time executives in big corporations are members of the global tribe. They are trying to sell to people who are deeply rooted in their own culture. So there is a disconnect. We see that in politics. We see that in many corporations.

**Kay:** *How can marketers in the U.S. sell to newly arrived immigrants, because they come from such different backgrounds and cultures?*

**CR:** If you risk your life to come to America, you want to stay. It’s a mistake to think immigrants want to bring their

country with them. What they want is to become Americans. So why do they want to come here?

I’ve done work in southern California with successful Mexicans that come to the U.S. What do they want? They want to see the U.S. of their dreams. They want to send their kids to college. They want to own a car and a house. They’re disappointed when they see that America is not the America of their dreams.

Big corporations should reinforce that dimension, that when you come to America you want to become an American. They should give you possibilities through products and services to feel that you are more American. Especially after two or three generations, the kids want to be American.

I was born in France, and I’m an American today. My second boy was born in Los Angeles, and he speaks fluent English, French, and Spanish. I remember at a certain time, when he was a kid, I just wanted to make sure that he was speaking French. When he had friends around, he didn’t want to speak French because he didn’t want them to think that he was not an American. He wanted to be like the other kids—until one day when he became an adolescent, and he wanted to impress some girls when I was with him. He spoke French to me, to show them that he could speak French. So that was a change in his attitude. But at the very beginning, children want to be “in.” They want to be integrated.

**Kay:** *So marketers in the U.S. should reinforce the codes that have to do with the dream, the American dream.*

**CR:** Absolutely. It’s interesting how with even the choice of words, the people who defend immigration, call immigrants the “Dreamers.” And so you see? This is what is key here. And everybody is always arguing, “Oh, the American dream doesn’t exist anymore.” Well, then, even with the new government today—the dream still exists. We can make America great again.

**Kay:** *Yeah. Knock on wood (laughter). Do you have any parting words that you’d like to share with VIEWS readers?*

**CR:** Well, yes. I’m an American. I was born in France by accident; that was not by choice. But because I was born during the war [World War II], I saw Americans come and liberate France. I was born in 1941 under German occupation. When I saw the Americans arriving and giving me chocolate and chewing gum, and though I was a little kid, I said, “I want to be one of them one day.”

And it took me a long time to get here—10 years of hard work to become an American citizen. But I’m proud of it. I think that big corporations and people who are Americans today, it’s time to be proud to be an American. The global world is looking at America. I read somewhere that we are supposed to be the last best hope for mankind. I know it’s kind of arrogant and pretentious, but I think there is a reality here. Around the world, people want to come to America. Let’s picture America as the country we want to have, the ideal dimension. We represent hope. We still are some kind of an ideal dream for many people around the world and so let’s make sure we don’t forget that.

**Kay:** *Okay. Thank you so much, Dr. Rapaille. This has been a wonderful interview.*

**CR:** Thank you so much. My pleasure. 🙏