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Content**Photo 1.2** Family traditions draw heavily from the concepts of worldview.

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Every cultural group must deal with all three time orientations—past, present, and future—to maintain existence over time. The preference or dependence on a particular time orientation separates cultural groups. To participate in a financial savings plan implies that an individual is preparing for the future. Investing 4 or more years to obtain a college degree is another example of future-time orientation. Cultural groups that devote a great deal of time to the study and practice of past rituals, art forms, and doctrine are reflective of past-time orientation.

The value placed on human activity is an orientation that also differs between cultural groups. Some focus on being or living only for the day. Others focus on becoming, searching, and working for self-growth and improvement. A third orientation places more emphasis on accomplishments that are measurable by external standards. All three orientations may exist within any large group of people; however, the group as a whole shows a preference for one. Members who show evidence of that preferred activity are then deemed to be successful.

The last orientation identified to differentiate between cultures is that of human relations. Three different patterns emerge: lineal, collaborative, and individualistic. The lineal pattern is characterized by dominant group goals, a chain of command, and a commitment to maintaining the group over time. A collaborative pattern is reflected in the concept of a team. Someone operating from the individualistic pattern will place primary emphasis on personal goals and objectives and on personal autonomy.

How does this worldview framework impact family decision-making? Every decision made by a family reflects cultural preferences at multiple levels. For instance, when a parent decides to participate in a college savings plan for his or her child, this decision reflects core beliefs that education is important, that sacrificing today for something that might come to be in the future is a worthy action, and that a college degree is an accomplishment viewed positively by the larger social group.

A human service professional operating from his or her own worldview will find that his or her ability to serve individuals and families functioning within another orientation is problematic. When an individual is devoted to collaborative relationships (i.e., family, gang, religion), he or she will not consider solutions that involve competitive actions or individualistic accomplishments. If a parent believes that children are inherently good or bad, behavior modification plans will be viewed as illogical. A family struggling for many generations with intense poverty may see no value in saving or planning for the future when surviving each day requires so much of its resource base.

As Payne (1998) states,

The role of the educator or social worker or employer is not to save the individual, but rather to offer a support system, role models, and opportunities to learn, which will increase the likelihood of the person's success. Ultimately, the choice always belongs to the individual. (p. 149)



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...not even understand the need in her home country, safety, it is not uncommon for infants to share their parents' bed for the first few years.

Another important cultural influence on family resource management is **worldview**. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) developed a framework for comparing and contrasting the different value systems between and among different cultural groups. The assumptions underlying their work include the following:

Worldview: the common concept of reality shared by a particular group of people, usually referred to as a culture or an ethnic group; an individual as well as a group phenomenon

- There is a limited number of common human problems for which all people at all times must find some solution. Most families, at one time or another, must match needs and resources to feed, clothe, educate, and protect their members.
- There is variability in solutions to all the problems; it is neither limitless nor random, but definitely variable within a range of possible solutions. Each family and each situation is unique; however, experiences have common factors between and among families.
- All alternatives of all solutions are present in all societies at all times but are differentially preferred. Choices made by any family at any given time may differ from those of others because of cultural expectations and beliefs. (p. 10)

As a result of these different value frameworks, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck identified five distinctive **orientations** that exist within any particular cultural group, yet differ between groups. These orientations are **human nature, humans and nature, time, activity, and relations**.

Orientation: an awareness of self in relation to time, place, and person; an integrated set of attitudes and beliefs

The orientation of **human nature** may be viewed by a cultural group as evil, a mixture of good and evil, or basically good. Often, cultural practices are based on these beliefs. Consider the judicial system. The practice of imprisoning criminals for certain periods of time with rehabilitative treatment suggests a culture that believes that humans are basically good but can be misled. Religions that believe in original sin purport human nature as basically evil, with possible salvation through ritual.

The **relationship between humans and nature** is an orientation that can be categorized in three **perspectives**. Humans can be subjugated to, be in harmony with, or have mastery over nature. Refusal of medical treatment is illustrative of a subjugation orientation. Air conditioning and heating systems are used by many to gain mastery or control over the weather elements. Today, emerging concerns over environmental quality and the sustainability of natural resources have forced a reconsideration of harmony between man and nature.



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