



## The Learning Mindset in Action

“Lou”, a senior leader at Avon moved from Brazil to work in the US on assignment in NYC. At about age 9, he moved with his family to the US; his father was a senior leader with the Brazilian army who was assigned to work in the US. Lou refers to this experience as a kind of watershed moment for him, and sees it as being responsible for teaching him many of the fundamental skills of a global leader. He didn’t know English, the culture and customs were different, the food was different, he was in school with other children studying in English, social dynamics were different...everything was different. He had to learn and adapt quickly to survive. And he did.

Lou described his assignment to work in NYC for Avon as a very enjoyable experience. He soaked up the culture, enjoyed the differences in customs, and ate food that he was unfamiliar with. He contrasted his experience with that of his colleague “Maria.” He and Maria would spend time together because they both came from Brazil and knew each other. Maria hated being in NYC and everything about her experience. The things that excited Lou alienated Maria: how waiters treat you in restaurants (e.g., bringing you the check before you ask for it); different approaches to communication between people (e.g., New Yorkers being very direct and to the point, vs. Brazilians being much more affiliation-oriented and social); fast-paced vs. relaxed; lots of touching and hugging vs. aversion to touching and hugging, or at least more distance between people feeling like purposefully holding you at a distance.

Maria struggled to adapt to and learn from the experience, and she ultimately left the assignment to return to Brazil. Lou focused on experiencing and learning everything he could. He welcomed the new experiences, and was interested in and excited to learn. He used these experiences to learn about others and the differences, and how he could adapt to the culture and setting. Lou had a Learning Mindset, while Maria did not.

What can you think of that could help Maria develop a Learning Mindset?