HIDDEN RULES OF POVERTY

Hidden Rules are the unspoken cues and habits of a group. All groups have hidden rules. An individual brings with him/her the hidden rules of the class in which he/she was raised. Hidden rules help us survive and negotiate. To be successful, we must understand the hidden rules of class and teach others the rules that will make them successful at school, work, and in the community.

Hidden Rules	Poverty Class	Middle Class	Wealthy Class
Driving Forces	Survival, Relationships & Entertainment	Work, Achievement, Material Security	Financial, Political, Social Connections
Food	Did you get enough?	Did you like it?	Was it presented well?
Power	Linked to Personal Respect, Can't stop bad things from happening	Power and respect are separate, power in information and institutions	Power in expertise, connections, stability; influences policy and direction
Destiny	Believes in Fate Cannot do much to mitigate chance	Believes in choice Can change the future with good choices now	Noblesse oblige
Time	The present is most important Decisions for the moment	Future most important Decisions made against future ramifications	Traditions and history most important, decisions made partially on basis of tradition/decorum
Money	To be used - spent	To be managed	To be conserved and invested
Education	Valued as abstract, not a reality	Crucial for climbing success ladder and making money	Necessary tradition for making and maintaining connections
Personality	Is for entertainment Sense of humor highly valued	Is for acquisition and stability Achievement is highly valued	Is for connections, financial, political, and social connections are highly valued
Clothing	Valued for individual style and expression of personality	Valued for its quality and acceptance into norm of middle class, label is important	Valued for its artistic sense and expression, designer is important
World View	Sees world in terms of local setting	Sees world in terms of national setting	Sees world in terms of international view
Humor	About people	About situations	About social faux pas
Language	Casual register Language is about survival	Formal register Language is about negotiation	Formal register Language is about networking

Adapted: Bridges Out of Poverty, Strategies for Professionals and Communities,

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