

Appalachian Culture



Found in the Following States...

- | | |
|----------|----------------|
| Georgia | Pennsylvania |
| Kentucky | South Carolina |
| Maryland | Tennessee |
| Virginia | North Carolina |
| Ohio | West Virginia |

Be Real

Mountain people like people to be real - nothing phony nor imitation. When you come to the mountains you do not have to try to be like a mountain person just be who you are ... in their culture.

If there is something you do not like, express it.

Pretense is obvious to people of Appalachia. They have seen it too often.

Explain to them your culture and ask them to share their culture.

Never attempt to lead by ...
coercion, manipulation, or intimidation.
You will soon be found out and relationship will cease.

For when you fall out of the good graces of Mountain people ... very rarely do you again get back in.

To Mountain people ...
when they love you ...
they will do anything for you.

When they do not love you and respect you ...
all you say and do will not matter.

Be Practical

Mountain people look at everything through the eyes of,
"What would be practical?"

They are very practical people doing things that work for them. They do not care much for aesthetic appearance ... but rather:
"Does it serve the purpose?"

If it serves the purpose, whatever it may be, even in their church services, then it will do.

You will see things in homes, churches, or yards that with just a little effort or another piece it would look or operate so much better.
A word of advice ... leave it as it is.

The way business is conducted in a church service could be done much more efficient with your suggestions, just be quiet.

Mountain people like to ...
talk it out ...
leave it alone ... and
do not fix it if it's not broke.

Remember ...
it worked before you came ...
and it will work after you leave.

Be Patient

Mountain people do not take to change quickly, unlike so many who believe change is good... they have to observe before agreeing.

Things often remain the same for years.

They are patient and expect the same from you.

Patience will be your friend with Mountain People. You may suggest an improvement and in fact may make a change. You may be so proud of what you have accomplished and show everyone your improvement.

But when you leave...
they will change back
to the way it was.

Mountain people change...

when it becomes their idea.

You do not work to change things. You work to let your idea become theirs and let them do the changing. Long range planning is not a high priority.

To Mountain people...

trust must be earned...
not assumed.

We're Emotional

Mountain people mostly base their decisions on emotions, or feelings. Please understand they are emotional and exhibit this emotion in all phases of life.

Their style of worship is expressed with feeling.

Disagreements are also expressed with such deep feeling that often crying occurs and conversation may stop till another time.

When forgiveness occurs... there also are the same deep emotional feelings where expressions of kisses and hugs are exchanged. Feelings run deep.

Love and hate are expressed through actions.

Mountain people...
are touching people...
and when they love you...
they will do anything for you...
and when there is a "falling out"...
they will do very little for you.

We're Personal

Mountain people enjoy life and the simple things.

They do not need much to satisfy... a pick-up truck, a shot gun, a fishing rod, simple food, simple housing (their own home place) and furnishings.

The love of the land with their space, is most important.

A good time is to go 4x4ing (four wheeling) on the country roads, a hot dog roast or picnic with plenty of "soda pop", where the day and evening are filled with laughter, country or gospel music, a lot of chit-chat... children playing and the dog wagging his tail.

Mountain people and their attachment in life is not to things... but to people and the land.

Family is high priority. Often if you offend one, all take it personally.

Written by:

Dr. John Sullivan, Executive Director
Florida Baptist Convention
Native West Virginian

Dr. Donald Deel, Associational Missionary
Mt. State Baptist Association, West Virginia
Native West Virginian