

社交篇

American Social Life

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# 近美国人的 生活

*Approaching American Life*

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社交篇  
藏书章

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## 前言

为帮助广大青年学生和英语爱好者学习地道的美国英语,并了解美国人的大众文化与日常生活,以及美国主要大都市的特点和风景名胜,我们编写了《走近美国人的生活》这套丛书。本丛书的《社交篇》、《家庭篇》和《教育篇》的英文材料均选自最近几年全美各地报刊杂志的生活专栏,以咨询问答的形式编排,内容涉及家庭生活、人际关系、恋爱婚姻、身体健康和教育理念等各个方面。每篇短文后面附若干中文注释,主要解释该文中的背景和语言点,包括俚语、谚语、行话以及特殊口语表达方式等方面的难点和重点。《旅游篇》详细介绍了美国 20 个主要大都市的地貌、经济、文化、风俗、宗教及风景名胜,内容选自美国城市导游介绍,文中部分英文生词后加了中文,文后附有中文注释,以帮助读者深透理解材料的内容并学到一定的语言知识。

本丛书选材广泛、内容丰富、语言精辟、用词优美、原汁原味,从几个侧面展示了美国人日常生活中的喜怒哀乐、风土人情及都市名胜。所选材料难度适

中,适合于具有中等以上英语水平的读者阅读和学习。

本丛书是作为一种休闲读物来编写的。读者阅读此书,既是一种消遣,又可以学习美国的语言和文化知识,还可以了解美国人的生活状况及都市名胜,实在是一举多得。

本丛书的编著者有的曾在美国留学数年,有的正在美国工作,对美国的社会、文化及民情均做过认真的研究。编写这套丛书,就是想把美国人生活的几个侧面原原本本地介绍给国内读者,使大家不出国门便能“走近美国人的生活”。

编者



# • 1 •

## DEAR MRS. ADVICE:

I was upset by the letter from the woman who did not want a male technician to perform a breast **sonogram**<sup>1</sup>. I am a **registered nurse**<sup>2</sup> who happens to be a man. According to the latest statistics, less than 5 per-cent of the **R.N.s**<sup>2</sup> in Canada are male. Discrimination against health-care providers based on gender offends more than just the workers involved. Due to the over-whelming imbalance of women in nursing and other health professions (except physicians), most male patients **have no choice but to**<sup>3</sup> receive care from women. Why extend to female patients the privilege denied to males—that of selecting the gender of their **caregivers**<sup>4</sup>? Many women who express discomfort with male nurses and other providers are, at the same time, quite comfortable seeing male **physicians**<sup>5</sup>. Women are doctors, lawyers, engi-



neers, politicians, welders, auto workers and involved in other formerly men-only trades and professions. Nobody would suggest that a woman at GM<sup>6</sup> or Ford could only work on certain types of cars. Why treat health-care providers any differently?

### MRS. ADVICE SAYS:

If, as you have stated, fewer than 5 percent of the registered nurses in Canada are male, you can be sure that the patients up there have very little choice. Male patients are going to be treated by female nurses. **Period**<sup>7</sup>. The law of supply and demand works in every area of life—health-care services included.



### 注释

1. sonogram 超声波扫描图
2. registered nurse = R.N. 注册护士; 护理人员
3. have no choice but to 不得不; 只好
4. caregivers 护理人员
5. physicians 内科医师
6. GM 美国通用汽车公司
7. Period. 就这么回事; 问题就这么简单。(period 一词原是书面语中的句号, 美国人常在口语里用以回答那些看似复杂, 但实际上简单明了的问题。)



## • 2 •

### DEAR MRS. ADVICE:

Are people who stay with you for several days to help you with cooking and cleaning? If they bring something, should they take the **leftovers**<sup>1</sup> home? Should they strip the bedding?

### MRS. ADVICE SAYS:

They should not walk off with the **remnants**<sup>2</sup> of whatever food they brought you, leaving the **soiled bedding**<sup>3</sup> all over the guest room. That much Mrs. Advice will **grant** you.

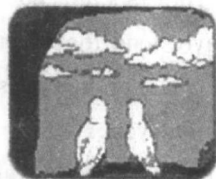
But unless several days means at least a week, she would limit their housework obligation to performing an occasional chore as long as the rest of the time they promise to **keep wringing their hands**<sup>4</sup> and declaring they want to help.





## 注释

1. leftovers 剩余物; 残羹剩饭
2. remnants 剩余物; 残羹剩饭
3. soiled bedding 弄脏了的床上用品
4. keep wringing one's hands 不时地搓双手(表示心情迫切或苦恼)



animated



## • 3 •

### DEAR MRS. ADVICE:

I finally moved to a nice place and installed the beautiful, new white carpets I've always wanted. Now, my friends are **driving me over the edge**<sup>1</sup>, because I don't want them to wear their shoes in the house and get the rugs dirty. One of my girlfriends says she'd rather not come at all. Am I being unreasonable? I thought your home is supposed to be your castle. Who is right here?

### MRS. ADVICE SAYS:

Yes, **your home is your castle**<sup>2</sup>—but most don't come with moats these days. Your friends are reacting to your new rules, and while you have every right to impose them, here are some things to keep in mind. First, some rug-cleaning experts say that sweaty, smelly feet applied directly to a carpet can be more troublesome than feet encased in nice, clean shoes. Second, **some people just**



**feel naked without their footwear**<sup>3</sup>—they either feel too short without them, or think their feet smell. The cost of an annual cleaning job or two may be cheaper than shopping for new friends, so you may wish to try a compromise: Allow clean shoes, which have been thoroughly wiped on a towel or mat, and keep some **extra slippers**<sup>4</sup> around for those rainy, muddy days, when even your **whiniest**<sup>5</sup> friends will understand.



### 注释

1. drive sb. over the edge (美口)使某人发疯
2. Your home is your castle. 你的家就是你的城堡。(来自谚语: An Englishman's house is his castle. 意指“英国习俗不容任何人擅入私宅。”)
3. Some people just feel naked without their footwear. 有些人没穿鞋袜的感觉就好像没穿衣服一样。
4. extra slippers 额外的拖鞋
5. whiny 喜欢埋怨的



## • 4 •

### DEAR MRS. ADVICE:

What do you do when your friend makes no effort to contact you or even say hello? She calls only if I call her first. I've known this person for eight years. We live in the same city and used to be really close. She **skirts around the issue**<sup>1</sup> because she's too afraid to deal with anything involving conflict. She never remembers or acknowledges my birthday, yet always manages to make sure I'm involved with her birthday activities. Should I give up on her?

### DEAR READER:

Consider your definition of "friend". Is it someone who brings over a six pack of beer to celebrate your **lottery winnings**<sup>2</sup>—or someone who trots over with a pie when you're **feeling cranky**<sup>3</sup> and unloved? Is a friend a person who knows you'll fill in when the regular card



players are sick—or a person who turns down a party invite because she already has plans with you? Some folks have a **low-level expectation**<sup>4</sup> of those employed in their friendship department. Don't confuse a colleague, acquaintance, friend's friend or even a generally nice person with a friend. If you can't call this woman in the middle of the night when you get bad news, then you are perhaps “buddies” or “acquaintances”. It sounds as though she has a lot of her own problems and rigid rules. You can play by them, or **downgrade the relationship to another category**<sup>5</sup>. Ask yourself how much energy you want to invest in this person. Sometimes a relationship is still worth having when the expectations are different—but then the illusions are gone, and you can enjoy it for what it is.



### 注释

1. skirt around the issue 回避这个问题
2. lottery winnings 抽彩中奖
3. feel cranky (美口)感觉心情不好
4. low-level expectation 期望值较低
5. downgrade the relationship to another category 把该友情降为另一类别



## • 5 •

### DEAR MRS. ADVICE:

I just learned my best friend had a **nervous breakdown**<sup>1</sup> in September and has been seeing a therapist and **taking anti-depressants**<sup>2</sup>. We had a huge disagreement about her man—he cheats on her, walks in and out of her life and tells her it's because **she pressures him about marriage**<sup>3</sup>. It's very hard for me to know that emotionally she is losing it. I'm also concerned for her son. I feel so helpless. I just don't want to wake up one day to a phone call telling me she's tried to **commit suicide**<sup>4</sup> or that she's in a **mental hospital**<sup>5</sup>.

### DEAR READER:

A friend isn't particularly a person who nods incessantly as we pursue a disastrous route to happiness. I think friendship allows for **candid and outspoken**<sup>6</sup> assessments of what we see. Although her therapist's job is



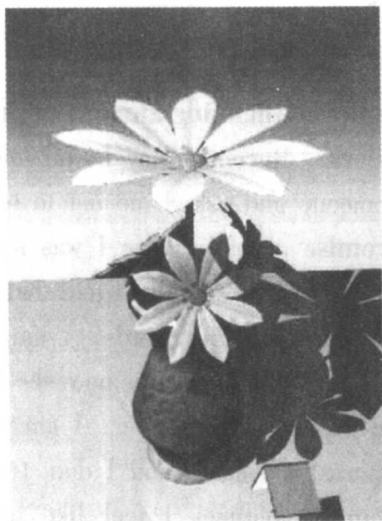
not to insist she make certain decisions, it is his job to help her assess whether the road she is on is going to lead to the place she hopes to land. Ask your friend a lot of questions, such as “When you were a girl and dreamed about a wonderful man, was this the one you had in mind? Does he have the qualities you’d like your son to have? Is he a good role model?” And of course, the **fave**<sup>7</sup>: “When you are in the presence of this person, do you really like who you are?” She is caught in a losing position—she isn’t going to marry this man and she isn’t going to say goodbye. Tell her you are very worried and be there for discussions or offer to go to therapy with her. Sometimes depressed people have **skewed ways**<sup>8</sup> of thinking and problem solving. And make sure you don’t get caught in her **vortex of despair**<sup>9</sup>. She’s lucky to have you for a friend.



1. nervous breakdown 神经失常
2. take anti-depressants 服抗抑郁药物
3. She pressures him about marriage. 在婚姻方面,她给他施压。
4. commit suicide 自杀不用说
5. a mental hospital (= mental asylum, mental home) 精神病院



- 6. candid and outspoken 不偏不倚, 开诚布公
- 7. fave (= favorite) 最好的
- 8. skewed ways 扭曲的方式
- 9. vortex of despair 绝(失)望的旋涡







## • 6 •

DEAR MRS. ADVICE:

I have an overwhelming amount of guilt hanging on my shoulders<sup>1</sup>. Recently, my friend told me something about someone and asked me not to tell a soul. I broke my promise<sup>2</sup>, not because I was mad, but because I just couldn't help myself. I told that person what my friend told me. In other words, I am a blabber-mouth<sup>3</sup>. My friend found out and now she is extremely angry with me. I can't blame her. I am really scared she will never trust me again and I don't want to hurt this relationship. Sometimes I feel like crying. What should I do?

DEAR READER:

You feel guilty because you did not act in the way that your beliefs demand. **The deed is done and cannot be erased<sup>4</sup>**. The best you can do with a major blunder is