

Unit One

1.1 Friendship American Style

美国式的友谊

文化是语言的重要组成部分,不同的文化背景会形成不同的价值观念。学习语言必不可少的一个环节就是学习文化。作为英语学习者,了解美国青年人的交友观,无论是对于跨文化交际或者对于以后踏出国门进行深造都大有裨益。

Friendships formed at a university can be some of the strongest relationships men and women ever make. College friendships, if they are strong, can **transcend** time and distance. Yet, making friends is not always easy and it can be even more difficult for international students. Knowing a few key ideas about American communication patterns¹ can help international students develop these campus friendships.

transcend
[trænˈsend]
vt. 超越,超出

Self-disclosure is the sharing of personal information and feelings between two or more people. It is an important part of communication in the United States and is governed by certain accepted practices². People are careful and somewhat **wary** about disclosing informa-

self-disclosure
[ˌselfdɪsˈklɔʊzə]
n. 自我暴露
wary
[ˈweəri]
a. 留神的

tion because it can make one sound weak or **vulnerable**. These are two traits Americans do not see desirable.

Usually, disclosure is **mutual**. People expect that, "If I share personal information of feelings, you will also." It takes place gradually and the people involved must disclose at the same rate³ for both persons to be comfortable.

Self-disclosure involves a high level of trust between two people. This is because the particular information being shared is not available unless it is given by the person who holds the information.

It is best not to share personal problems when first meeting a new person or talking to a casual **acquaintance**. For example, most people feel uncomfortable listening to a person they do not know well about an operation or sickness the person has had recently.

Intimate disclosures⁴ about a sexual relationship are not appreciated by most people either, unless the person being disclosed to has shared something of a similar nature. It is always so important to know that, in general, both men and women in the U. S. are more comfortable disclosing to women. This is not to say women don't share private talk with men or men don't disclose to other men. It is

vulnerable

[ˈvʌlnərəbl]

a. 脆弱的

mutual

[ˈmju:tʃʊəl]

a. 相互的

acquaintance

[əˈkweɪntəns]

n. 熟人, 相识

just that this society, historically, has not encouraged men to express their feelings openly.

In his book, *The Handbook of Foreign Student Advising*, Gary Althen identifies five **generalizations** about the communicative style of Americans:

generalization

[ˌdʒenərəlaɪzɪʃən]

n. 概括, 归纳

Preferred topics of conversation — this is sometimes referred to as “small talk⁵.” Americans prefer to talk about the weather, sports, jobs, mutual acquaintances, and past experiences, especially ones in common with their conversation partner. A few topics are almost forbidden. These consist of personal income, the price of an item unless it is volunteered, and the age of an older adult.

Favorite form of verbal interaction⁶ — in a conversation between Americans, participants take turns⁷ speaking frequently and usually after each has spoken only a few sentences. No one speaks for very long at a time. Americans also prefer to avoid arguments. If an argument is unavoidable, it is carried on in a controlled tone and volume as in any other conversation. Ritual conversations⁸ are kept to a minimum⁹, basically “How are you?” “Fine, how are you?” “Fine.” “Nice to meet you.” “Hope to see you again.”

Depth of involvement — “small talk” is

preferred. This usually consists of nonpersonal conversation with little or no silence breaks taking place. Silence causes the participants to feel uncomfortable.

Manner of speaking — the American ideal is to be somewhat verbally **adept**, to speak in moderate tones and to use few gestures.

adept
[əˈdept]

a. 熟练的 内行的

Level of meaning emphasized — Americans, taught in the scientific method of understanding the world, look for specific facts and physical or **quantifiable** evidence to support their viewpoints. One of the most important ways to get to know others is to become involved in activities and events on campus. Involvement may be easiest through campus organizations which allow students to meet people with similar interests.

quantifiable
[ˈkwɒntifaɪəbl]
a. 量化的

International students should understand that Americans don't normally extend themselves¹⁰ because they fear **rejection** by others. Americans have also grown up without knowing much about other countries and other people of the world. A certain uneasiness is created when faced with the unknown. International students should be **assertive** and may need to take some of the first steps. Despite the fact that Americans seem to back off¹¹ from others, they do value those who approach them.

rejection
[riˈdʒekʃən]
n. 抵制 拒绝

assertive
[əˈsɜːtɪv]
a. 断言的

The short attention span¹² of many American students may also pose a problem. If Americans are not interested, they just shut off¹³. Another thing to keep in mind is that Americans are talkers rather than listeners. The best way to get a conversation going is by asking someone to talk about himself or herself.

The way a person listens is very important to Americans. Americans expect eye contact¹⁴, head nods, and verbal **interjections** like “Uh huh,” “Hmmm,” “I know,” and so on. These behaviors communicate interest and attention to Americans.

While the informal rules of American interpersonal communication may seem **daunting**, knowing how and why people communicate makes it easier for international students to feel comfortable. Those first encounters may lead to **rewarding** friendships.

interjection

[ˌɪntəˈdʒekʃən]

n. 插入

daunting

[ˈdɔːntɪŋ]

a. 令人“气馁的

rewarding

[ˈriːwɔːdɪŋ]

a. 有回报的

Notes

1. communication patterns 交际(沟通)的类型、模式。
2. accepted practices 被广泛接受的做法。
3. at the same rate 以同样的速率。
4. intimate disclosure : 亲密朋友之间的倾诉。
5. small talk 闲聊。
6. verbal interaction 口头交际。
7. take turns 轮流。

8. ritual conversations 谈话中的礼仪部分。
9. are kept to a minimum 保持到最小程度。
10. extend themselves : 此处为主动要求建立友谊。
11. back off 退缩。
12. attention span 注意力持续的时间。
13. shut off 不答腔, 不讲话。
14. eye contact 互视对方。

Exercises

I Answer the following questions.

1. What are the strongest relationships people ever make according to the author? And why?
2. What are the two traits that Americans do not regard as desirable?
3. What are the topics that are forbidden to a casual conversation partner?
4. What is the ideal American manner of speaking?
5. Which of the American communication principles mentioned in the text impresses you most?

II Choose the best answer for each of the following statements.

1. People are cautious to disclose information for the reason that this act is _____.
 [A] despised
 [B] desirable
 [C] a mark of one's cowardice
 [D] a mark of one's sensitivity
2. Self-disclosure involves a high level of trust between two _____

people in that _____.

- [A] it shows the willingness of the person who holds the particular information to share it with the other person
- [B] it shows that the person who holds the particular information tends not to trust the other person
- [C] it is unconventional for a person who holds the particular information to disclose it to the other person
- [D] it is uncomfortable and undesirable for the person who holds the information

3. Which of the following is NOT true of the text?

- [A] You can never ask anyone about his/her income.
- [B] You can never ask anyone about his/her age.
- [C] Generally you cannot ask anyone about the price of an item.
- [D] Generally you cannot ask anyone about his/her sexual relationship.

4. The fact that Americans expect eye contact, head nods and verbal interjections indicates that they expect _____.

- [A] the appreciation of the conversation partner
- [B] the respect of the conversation partner
- [C] the involvement of the conversation partner
- [D] the trust of the reliability of the information offered

5. Which of the following is true of the text?

- [A] Although Americans do not like to volunteer their feelings, they value those who approach them.
- [B] Americans are generally known as a nation of open minds, hence you can ask them whatever questions you like.
- [C] Americans as a race are surprisingly conservative.
- [D] Americans seldom have trust of others.

1.2 Beauty Is in the Eye of the Beholder

情人眼里出西施

“梦中情人”是一个永恒的话题，它给人们渴望与追求。本文描述了一个五彩缤纷的“爱”的世界。从中你也许会找到属于自己的梦想。

For years men and women have been getting married. They say their wedding **vows** which bring them together as one. They promise to love and **cherish** each other until death do them part.

vow
[vau]
n. 誓言
cherish
[ˈtʃerɪʃ]
vt. 珍爱

When a man and a woman get married, it is one of the biggest decisions they will make in life. A man may select a woman because he, in his own eyes, sees her as the just-right 'wife' for him. Every man has his own definition of what the “just-right” wife is. For instance, the millionaire man and the poor man both may define their just-right wife according to her physical qualities.

A millionaire may describe his “just-right” wife as charming, beautiful, sexy, intelligent, and well developed. On the other hand, a poor man may define his “just-right” wife as pleasing, attractive, desirable, **knowledgeable**,

knowledgeable
ˈnɒlɪdʒəbl
a. 懂事明理的

and **shapely**. Both men describe their just-right wife by the same physical qualities but use different words. The millionaires definition of the just-right wife is more elegant, whereas the poor man's definition is a more common, everyday **description**.

shapely

['ʃeɪplɪ]

a. 身材苗条的

description

[dɪ'skrɪpʃən]

n. 描述

Although some men define the just-right wife by her physical qualities, other men describe their just-right wife by her athletic qualities. For example, the outdoors man may define his just-right wife as a woman who loves to fish, to camp, to hunt, and to water ski², **whereas** the inside sportsman may define his just-right wife as a woman who enjoy watching football, basketball, baseball, and **wrestling**. Both of these men define their just-right wife by her sports qualities but in two different **atmospheres**.

whereas

[weə'reɪz]

conj. 却 而

wrestling

['reslɪŋ]

n. 摔跤

atmosphere

ˈætməsfɪə]

n. 氛围 范围

Still, there are other men who have their definitions of the just-right wife. For instance, consider the fit man and the fat man. The fit man may describe his just-right wife as a woman who gets up every weekday morning at six o'clock and runs two to three miles. After running, she prepares breakfast, washes the dishes, takes the children to school, and then goes to work. After work, she arrives home, washes a couple loads of laundry, goes

to exercise class³, picks the children up from school⁴ on her way home, and then cooks dinner. After dinner, she cleans the kitchen, bathes the children, and puts them to bed.

On the other hand, the fat man defines his just-right wife as a woman who gets up at eight o'clock in the morning, takes the children to McDonald's for breakfast, and drops them off at school⁵. She then comes back home and lies on the couch watching soap operas⁶ all day. The children have to walk home from school in the afternoon. When they arrive at home, she instructs them to clean the house, do the laundry, and fix some hotdogs for dinner. Both men define their just-right wife with qualities that they admire within themselves.

Men from all nationalities also have their definition of the just-right wife. For example, the Italian man describes his woman as a woman who stands six feet one inch tall with **blonde** hair and blue eyes, and who is well developed in the upper portion of her body. On the other hand, the French man may describe his ideal woman as a woman who stands only five feet three inches with brown hair and green eyes, and who is moderately built⁷.

Other nationalities, such as the German

blonde

[blond]

a. & n. 白肤金发的(女人)

man and the Spanish man, may define their just-right wife as a woman with style⁸. The German man may describe his just-right wife as a woman who likes to drive expensive sports cars, a woman who visits a different foreign country every month and wears only the most expensive designer clothing, but the Spanish man may define his just-right wife as a woman who enjoys giving dinner parties every weekend, wearing a lot of jewelry, and drinking expensive wines.

In addition to the other men's definitions of the just-right wife, the **bachelor** also has a definition. He says that the just-right wife is someone else's wife. He picks her up in a bar, takes her to his house, and takes her home in the morning. The bachelor has no real definition for the just-right wife. That is why he is still a bachelor.

bachelor
[ˈbætʃələ
n. 单身汉

Notes

1. just-right wife : 理想的妻子。
2. water ski; 滑水运动。
3. go to exercise class 去健美班。
4. picks the children up from school 接孩子放学。
5. drops them off at school 开车送他们到学校。
6. soap operas 肥皂剧。
7. moderately built 体型匀称适中的。

8. a woman with style 有品味的女人。

Exercises

Answer the following questions.

1. What's the difference in definition of the just-right wife between a millionaire and a poor man?
2. What is one of the biggest decisions in your life according to the passage?
3. How does the Spanish man define his just-right wife?
4. According to the author, why is a man still a bachelor?
5. If you are a young man, what is your just-right wife supposed to be?

|| Choose the best answer for each of the following statements.

1. From the context, we can decide that the phrase “well developed” in Paragraph 2 means _____.
[A] wealthy [B] healthy
[C] charming [D] shapely
2. From the fourth paragraph, we learn that the outdoors man defines the just-right wife by her _____.
[A] physical qualities [B] athletic qualities
[C] sports qualities [D] Both B and C.
3. Why does the author mention “the fit man” and “the fat man” in the text?
[A] Both men define their just-right wife with qualities that they admire within themselves.
[B] Both men are poor.
[C] Both men define their just-right wife with physical qualities.

[D] Both men promise to love and cherish their just-right wife.

4. Which of the following is NOT true according to the last two paragraphs but one?

[A] An Italian man believes that his just-right wife should be a woman who is well developed in the upper portion of her body.

[B] A French man has no liking for a strong woman.

[C] A German man likes a sportive and fashionable woman.

[D] A Spanish man seems to like a housewife to be his just-right wife.

5. According to the text , a stylish woman is _____ just-right wife.

[A] the millionaire's

[B] the inside sportsman's

[C] the German's

[D] the fat man's

1.3 What Do Parents Owe Their Children? 父母欠孩子什么？

乍看上去,题目所提的问题似乎多余,但仔细品味却又引人深思。作者以独特的视角阐述了父母在孩子成长过程中应注意的问题以及应该承担的责任。为了突出主题,本文作者匠心独运,首先让读者了解父母不应为孩子做些什么事情,然后才转向主题。这种强烈的对比手法使文章结构新颖,节奏铿锵有力。

If I had to select a word that best describes the majority of American parents, that word would be guilt-ridden¹. How sad it is to see parents become the willing **victims** of the “give-me game,”² only to discover that, no matter what they do, it isn't enough. In the end, they are **despised** for their lack of firmness³ and blamed when their **spoiled** children get into trouble. With this in mind, I shall first answer the question: “What do parents owe their children?” And I shall start with what they don't owe them.

victim

[ˈvɪktɪm]

n. 牺牲品 受害者

despise

[dɪsˈpaɪz]

vt. 轻视,藐视

spoil

[spɔɪl]

vt. 宠坏,惯坏

Parents don't owe their children every minute of their day and every **ounce** of their energy. They don't owe round-the-clock⁴ car service, singing lessons, tennis lessons, expensive bicycles, a motorcycle or a car when they reach

ounce

[aʊns]

n. 盎司,英两

sixteen, or a trip to Europe when they graduate.

I take the firm position that⁵ parents do not owe their children a college education. If they can afford it, fine; they can certainly send them to the best universities. But they must not feel guilty if they can't. If the children really want to go, they'll find a way. There are plenty of loans and scholarships for the bright and eager who can't afford to pay.

After children marry, their parents do not owe them a down payment⁶ on a house or money for the furniture. They do not have an **obligation** to baby-sit or to take their grand children in their home when the parents are on vacation. If they want to do it, it must be considered a favor, not an obligation.

obligation

[ˈɒblɪˈɡeɪʃən]

n. 义务 职责

In my opinion, parents do not owe their children an **inheritance**, no matter how much money they have. One of the surest ways to produce a **loafer** is to let children know that their future is assured.

inheritance

[ɪnˈherɪtəns]

n. 遗传 遗产

loafer

[ˈləʊfə]

n. 游手好闲的人,

二流子

Do parents owe their children anything? Yes, they owe them a great deal.

One of their chief obligations is to give their children a sense of personal worth⁷, for **self-esteem** is the basis of a good mental health. A youngster who is constantly made to feel stupid and unworthy, constantly compared

self-esteem

[self-ɪsˈtiːm]

n. 自尊, 自尊

to brighter brothers, sisters, or cousins, will become so unsure, so afraid of failing, that he or she won't try at all. Of course, they should be corrected when they do wrong; this is the way children learn. But the criticisms should be balanced with praises, preferably with a smile and a kiss. No child is ever too old to be hugged.

Parents owe their children firm guidance and **consistent** discipline. It is frightening for a youngster to feel that he is in charge of himself; it's like being in a car without brakes. The parent who says "No" when other parents say "Yes" sends a double message. He is also saying: "I love you, and I am ready to risk your anger, because I don't want you to get into trouble."

consistent

[kən'sistent]

a. 始终如一的

Parents owe their children some religious training. The fact that so many strange **cults** are enjoying such success is proof that children feel the need for something spiritual in their life.

cult

[kʌlt]

n. 信仰, 狂热崇拜

Parents owe their children a comfortable feeling about their body, and enough information about sex to balance the misinformation⁸ that they will surely receive from their friends.

Parents owe their children privacy and respect for their personal belongings⁹. This

means not borrowing things without permission, not reading diaries and mail, not looking through purses, pockets, and drawers. If a mother feels that she must read her daughter's diary to know what is going on, the communication between them must be pretty bad.

Parents owe their children a set of solid values¹⁰ around which to build their lives. This means teaching them to respect the rights and opinions of others; it means being respectful to elders, to teachers, and to the law. The best way to teach such values is by example. A child who is lied to will lie¹¹. A child who sees his parents steal tools from the factory or towels from a hotel will think that it is all right to steal. A youngster who sees no laughter and no love in the home will have a difficult time laughing and loving.

No child asks to be born. If you bring a life into the world, you owe the child something. And if you give him his **due**, he'll have something of value to pass along to your grandchildren.

due

[dju:]

n. 所应得到的

Notes

1. guilt-ridden 满怀内疚的。
2. “give-me game”: “要什么给什么的游戏”。
3. lack of firmness 不坚决, 不坚定。