

THE VALUES AMERICANS LIVE BY*

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For newcomers to the USA - an introduction to common American values:

美国人的十三条基本价值观

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写给初到美国的访问者—简介美国人的基本价值观

Most Americans would have a difficult time telling you, specifically, what the values are which Americans live by. They have never given the matter any thought.

大部分美国人可能很难确切地告诉你，他们生活中遵循的基本价值观是什么，他们自己也从来没有细想过这个问题。

Even if Americans had considered this question, they would probably, in the end, decide not to answer in terms of a definitive list of values. The reason for this decision is itself one very American value – their belief that every individual is so unique that the same list of values could never be applied to all, or even most, of their fellow citizens.

即便美国人对这个问题进行过思考，他们最后可能也不愿意列出一张具体的价值观清单来回答这个问题。为什么呢？原因本身也反映了一条典型的美式价值观——他们相信每个人都是独一无二的，因此一张清单绝对不可能概括出所有甚至大部分美国人的价值观念。

Although Americans may think of themselves as being more varied and unpredictable than they actually are, it is significant that they think they are. Americans tend to think they have been only slightly influenced by

family, church or schools. In the end, each believes, “ I personally chose which values I want to live my own life by.”

美国人认为自己的族群非常多元化，难以一概而论，实际上也许并非如此，但重要的是他们自己的确这么想。美国人倾向于认为自己很少受到家庭、宗教或者学校的影响，这导致的结果是，每个美国人都相信：我奉为圭臬的一套价值观完全是我自己选择的。

Despite this self-evaluation, a foreign anthropologist could observe Americans. The list of typically American values would stand in sharp contrast to the values commonly held by the people of many other countries.

尽管美国人如此评价自我，但是外国人类学家对美国人有自己的观察。而这份典型的美式价值观清单，可能会与其他很多国家普遍遵循的价值观产生鲜明对比。

Over the years, I have introduced thousands of international visitors to life in the United States. This has caused me to try to look at Americans through the eyes of foreign visitors. I am confident that the values listed in this booklet describe most (but not all) Americans, and that understanding these values can help you, the international visitor, understand Americans.

多年以来，我引进过数千名国际访问者来到美国生活。这种经历促使我尝试通过外国访问者的视角看待美国人。我相信这本小册子上列出的内容能够反映出大部分（但不一定是全部）美国人的基本价值观念。对于国际访问者来说，理解这些价值观，能够帮助你更好地理解美国人。

It is my belief that if foreign visitors really understand how deeply ingrained these 13 values are in Americans, they will then be able to understand 95% of American actions -- actions which might otherwise appear “strange,” “confusing,” or “unbelievable” when evaluated from the perspective of foreigner’s own society and its values.

我相信，如果外国访问者能够真正理解这 13 条美式价值观是多么根深蒂固地扎根在美国人头脑中，那么他们就能够理解普通美国人 95

%的行为——从外国访问者自己的社会准则和价值观念角度来衡量的话，那些行为或许会显得非常“奇怪”，“令人困惑”，甚至“难以置信”。

The different behaviors of a people or a culture make sense only when seen through the basic beliefs, assumptions and values of that particular group. When you encounter an action, or hear a statement in the United States which surprises you, try to see it as an expression of one or more of the values listed in this booklet. For example, when you ask Americans for directions to get to a particular address in their own city, they may explain, in great detail, how you can get there on your own, but may never even consider walking a hundred meters with you to lead you to that place. Some foreign visitors have interpreted this sort of action as showing Americans' "unfriendliness." I would suggest, instead, that the self-help concept (value number 6 on our list) is so strong in Americans that they firmly believe that no adult would ever want, even temporarily, to be dependent on another. Also, their future orientation (value 8) makes Americans think it is better to prepare you to find other addresses on your own in the future.

一个人或者一种文化的不同行为表现，只有透过那个特定群体的基本信仰、设想和价值观念来看，才能说得通。当你在美国社会遭遇令自己惊讶的行为或言论时，试着将其看作是这本小册子上列出的某一条或者几条美式价值观的体现。比方说，当你在美国某个城市向当地人问路时，对方可能会非常仔细地跟你解释自行到达某处的路线和方向，哪怕只有 100 米远，对方也不一定会亲自带你过去。一些外国访问者把美国人的这种行为解读为“不友好”。但是，我要解释一下，正是因为“自助”观念（价值观清单中的第 6 条）深深根植在美国人头脑中，以至于他们坚信，没有任何一个成年人想要依赖其他人，哪怕只是暂时为之。同样，美国人的“未来导向型”（第 8 条价值观）价值观让他们认为，最好帮助你做好准备，这样以后你靠自己就能找到其他地址。

Before proceeding to the list itself, let me also point out that Americans see all of these values as very positive ones. They are not aware, for example, that the people of many countries view change (value 2) as negative, destructive and threatening. In fact, all 13 of these American values are judged by many of the world's citizens as negative and undesirable. Therefore, it is not enough simply to familiarize yourself with these values. You must also, so far as possible, consider them without the

negative or derogatory connotation that they might have for you, based on your own experience and cultural identity.

在开始阅读这张清单前，我还想要指出一点，美国人把这些价值观全部看作是非常积极的理念。例如，他们并没有意识到，不少国家的人把“变化”（第2条价值观）看作是消极、具有破坏性和威胁性的。事实上，所有这13条美式价值观在全世界很多国家中都被视作消极和不受欢迎的。因此，仅仅让自己熟悉这些价值观还不够。如果在你自己的个人经历和文化认同中，这些价值观存在着某些消极或者贬义的内涵，你必须还要学会尽可能地抛开成见。

It is important to state emphatically that my purpose in providing you with this list of the most important American values is not to convert you, the foreign visitor, to our values. I could not achieve that goal even if I wanted to, and I don't want to. I simply want to help you understand Americans with whom you will be relating – from their own value system rather than from yours.

在此我还要强调声明一点，我提供这份美国人基本价值观清单的目的，并不是企图为外国访问者洗脑，让你们由此信奉美式价值观。即使我有心想这么做，也不可能做到，而我并无此意。我只是想帮助你在跟美国人打交道的过程中，从美国人的价值体系而非你自己的价值体系去理解他们。

L. Robert Kohls

THE VALUES AMERICANS LIVE BY

A COMMENTARY ON THE LIST OF BASIC AMERICAN VALUES

美国人的 13 条基本价值观

对美国人基本价值观清单的注释

(译者注：小标题的黑字部分是直译，红字部分是意译)

1. **Personal Control over the Environment/Responsibility**

1. 对环境和责任的控制 (我的命运我做主)

Americans no longer believe in the power of Fate, and they have come to look at people who do as being backward, primitive, or hopelessly naive. To be called “fatalistic” is one of the worst criticisms one can receive in the American context; to an American, it means one is superstitious and lazy, unwilling to take any initiative in bringing about improvements.

美国人绝不听天由命，在他们眼中，那些笃信“命运力量”的人落后、单纯，并且拥有一种无可救药的天真。在美国社会，被称为“宿命论者”是一个人可能获得的最糟糕的批判之一，因为对于美国人来说，这意味着此人既迷信又懒惰，不愿意采取任何行动去改善自己的处境。

In the United States, people consider it normal and right that Man should control Nature, rather than the other way around. More specifically, people believe every single individual should have control over whatever in the environment might potentially affect him or her. The problems of one’s life are not seen as having resulted from bad luck as much as having come from one’s laziness and unwillingness to take responsibility in pursuing a better life. Furthermore, it is considered normal that anyone should look out for his or her own self-interests, first and foremost.

在美国社会，人们认为人对自然的控制是正常和合理的，而不是反过来由自然掌控人类。更具体地说，美国人认为，每个人都应该掌控周

围环境中可能会对自己产生影响的各种因素。如果一个人的生活状况窘迫，美国人并不认为主要原因在于运气不好，而是更多地归结为，这个人的懒惰以及没有决心承担责任去追求更好的生活。此外，美国人理所当然地认为，任何人都应当维护好自己的个人利益，这是首要也是最重要的事。

Most Americans find it impossible to accept that there are there are some things which lie beyond the power of humans to achieve or control. Americans have literally gone to the moon, because they refused to accept earthly limitations.

大部分美国人无法接受，世界上还有人类力量无法触及或者控制的事物。美国人事实上已经登上了月球，因为他们拒绝忍受地球的束缚。

Americans seem to be challenged - even compelled - to do, what seven-eighths of the world is certain cannot be done.

总而言之，美国人看起来愿意挑战甚至强迫自己去实现世界上大部分国家的人认定不可能完成的事情。

2. Change Seen as Natural and Positive

2. 改变是一件自然和积极的事情 (热爱改变)

In the American mind, change is seen as an indisputably good condition. Change is strongly linked to development, improvement, progress, and growth.

在美国人的思维中，“改变”是一件无可争辩的好事情，“改变”在很大程度上跟“发展”、“改善”、“进步”和“成长”紧密联系在一起。

Many older, more traditional cultures consider change as a disruptive force, to be avoided if at all possible. Instead of change, such societies value stability, continuity, tradition, and a rich and ancient heritage – none of which are considered very important in the United States.

在不少更加古老和传统的文化和社会中，“改变”被视作一种毁灭性力量，必须尽可能地避免。相较于改变，这些社会重视的是“稳定”、“持续”、“传统”以及古老丰富的历史遗产——不过这些东西在美国社会中统统不被重视。

These first two values – the belief that we can do anything and the belief that any change is good – together with an American belief in the virtue of hard work and the belief that each individual has a responsibility to do the best he or she can do have helped Americans achieve some great accomplishments. So, whether these beliefs are “true” is really irrelevant; and what is important is that Americans have considered them to be true and have acted as if they were, thus, in effect, causing them to happen.

前两条美式价值观——相信人类可以做任何事情以及改变是一件好事——连同美国人崇尚努力工作的美德，以及坚信每个人都有责任尽力把每件事情做好，这些价值观共同作用，帮忙美国人取得了一些伟大的成就。因此，这些信念本身是否“正确”已经无关紧要，重要的是美国人认为它们是正确的，并且在行动中也一以贯之，因此最终让理论变成了现实。

3. Time and its Control

3. 时间和时间控制观念（惜时如金）

Time is, for the average Americans, of utmost importance. To the foreign visitor, Americans seem to be more concerned with getting things accomplished on time (according to a predetermined schedule) than they are with developing deep interpersonal relationships. Schedules, for the American, are meant to be planned and then followed in the smallest detail.

在美国人眼中，时间最最重要。在外国访问者看来，比起发展深入的人际关系，美国人似乎更重视准时完成各项事务（并且是依照提前做好的计划）。对于美国人来说，计划必须要提前制定好，然后依照每一个细节实施下去。

It may seem to you that most Americans are completely controlled by the little machines they wear on their wrists, cutting their discussions off abruptly to make it to their next appointment on time. Americans' language is filled with references to time, giving a clear indication of how much it is valued. Time is something to be “on,” to be “kept,” “filled,” “saved,” “used,” “spent,” “wasted,” “lost,” gained,” “planned,” “given,” “made the most of,” even “killed.”

你可能会觉得，大部分美国人几乎完全被腕表上的指针控制，他们为此不惜唐突地中断正在进行的讨论，以便准时赶上下一个约会。美国人的语言中充斥着各种与时间相关的概念，清晰地显示出他们对时间的重视程度。时间可以是“准点”、“精确”，还可以被“填补”、“节约”、“花掉”、“消耗”、“浪费”、“失去”、“赢得”、“计划”、“给定”、“充分利用”，甚至会被“虚度”。

The international visitor soon learns that it is considered very rude to be late--even by 10 minutes--for an appointment in the United States. Whenever it is absolutely impossible to be on time, you should phone ahead and tell the person you gave been unavoidably detained and will be a half hour – or whatever – late.

外国访问者很快就会发现，在美国跟人约见时，迟到被视为一种非常不礼貌的行为，哪怕只有10分钟。如果实在没法准时赶到，也应该提前打电话告诉对方，自己因为不得已的原因延误，将会迟到半小时或者多久。

Time is so valued in America, because by considering time to be important, one can clearly accomplish more than if one “wastes” time and does not keep busy every minute. This philosophy has proven its worth. It has enabled Americans to be extremely productive, and productivity itself is highly valued in the United States. Many American proverbs stress the value in guarding our time, using it wisely, setting and working toward specific goals, and even expending our time and energy today so that the fruits of our labor may be enjoyed at a later time. (This latter concept is called “delayed gratification”.)

美国人之所以高度重视时间，是因为惜时如金的人显然能够取得更多成就，而浪费时间，没有时刻保持忙碌的人，自然一无所获。事实证明美国人的时间哲学有其价值。良好的时间观念令美国人拥有很高的工作效率，而工作效率本身在美国就十分受重视。不少美式谚语都强调珍惜时间，明智地利用时间，树立并且努力实现明确的目标，甚至主张今天花费时间和精力，之后再品尝甜美的劳动果实（这个概念在心理学上被称作“延迟满足”）。

4. Equality/Fairness

4. 平等 / 公平 (追求平等)

Equality is, for Americans, one of their most cherished values. This concept is so important for Americans that they have even given it a religious basis. They say all people have been “created equal.” Most Americans believe that God views all humans alike without regard to intelligence, physical condition, economic status or rank. In secular terms this belief is translated into the assertion that all people have an equal opportunity to succeed in life. Americans differ in opinion about how to make this ideal into a reality. Yet, virtually all agree that equality is an important civic and social goal.

对美国人来说，平等是最令其珍视的价值观之一。平等观念对美国人如此重要，以至于他们为其赋予了宗教理论支撑。美国人说“人人生而平等”，大部分美国人都相信，上帝看待所有人一视同仁，没有智力、身体状况、经济地位和等级之分。在世俗观念中，平等信念可以被诠释为一种主张，即所有人在生活中获得成功的机会均等。对于如何将这种理想变为现实，美国人的意见纷繁不一。不过，事实上几乎所有美国人都同意，平等是一种重要的公民权利和社会目标。

The equality concept often makes Americans seem strange to foreign visitors since seven-eights of the world feels quite differently. To most of the rest of the world rank and status and, authority are seen as much more desirable considerations – even if they personally happen to find themselves near the bottom of the social order. Class and authority seem to give people in those other societies a sense of security and certainty. People outside the United States consider it reassuring to know from birth, who they are and where they fit into the complex system called “society”.

平等观念，常常令外国访问者觉得美国人有点奇怪，因为世界上其他大部分国家对此的看法截然不同。对其他大部分文化和社会的人而言，等级、地位和权威是相当重要的考量——哪怕自己本身所处的位置接近社会底层。在这些社会中，阶级和权威给人们带来一种安全感和确定性。这里的人倾向认为，从出生之际就知道自己是谁，在自己所处的被称作“社会”的复杂体系中找到合适的位置，是一件令人安心的事。

Many highly placed foreign visitors to the United States are insulted by the way they are treated by service personnel (such as waiters in restaurants, clerks in stores or hotels, taxi drivers, etc.) Americans have an aversion to treating people of high position in a deferential manner, and conversely, often treat lower class people as if they were very important. Newcomers to the United States should realize that no insult or personal indignity is intended by this lack of deference to rank or position in American society. A foreigner should be prepared to be considered “just like anybody else” while in the country.

不少身居高位的外国访问者来到美国时，会感觉到服务行业人员对待他们的方式很无礼（比如餐厅里的侍者，商店或者酒店里的店员，出租车司机等等。）美国人很反感使用一种毕恭毕敬的态度对待地位较高的人，与此相反的是，他们对待较低阶层的人的方式却似乎显得对方非常重要。初来乍到美国的访问者应该意识到，在美国社会中，对于阶级和地位缺乏恭敬态度，并非一种无礼行为或者针对个人的羞辱。外国人来到美国时要做好一种心理准备，那就是美国人认为“所有人受到的待遇都一样”。

5. Individualism/Independence

5.个人主义 / 独立性 (个人主义)

The individualism that has been developed in the Western world from the Renaissance onward, beginning in the late 15th century, has taken its most exaggerated form in the 20th century United States. Here, each individual is seen as completely and marvelously unique, that is, totally different from all other individuals and, therefore, particularly precious and wonderful. Americans think they are more individualistic in their thoughts and actions than, in fact, they really are. They resist being thought of as representatives of a homogeneous group, whatever the group. They may, and do, join groups – in fact many groups – but somehow believe they are just a little different, just a little unique, just a little special, from other members of the same group. Furthermore, they tend to leave groups as readily as they enter them.

从 15 世纪晚期文艺复兴时期开始在西方兴起的个人主义观念，在 20 世纪的美国被发展到极致。在美国，每一个人都被看作是完完全全和不可思议的与众不同，也就是说，每个人具有独一无二性，因此，每个人的存在都特别珍贵和非凡。美国人在思想和行动上都认为自己极具个人主义特征，尽管事实不一定如此。他们拒绝被认为是任何同质群体的代表，事实上，美国人也参加各种组织——而且是很多组织——但却总是相信自己就是比这个组织中的其他成员稍微有那么一点差别、有那么一点独特、有那么一点不一样。而且，美国人退出组织和加入组织都十分随性。

Privacy, the ultimate result of individualism, is perhaps even more difficult for the foreigner to comprehend. The word “privacy” does not even exist in many non- Western languages. If it does, it is likely to have a strongly negative connotation, suggesting loneliness or forced isolation from the group. In the United States, privacy is not only seen as a very positive condition, but is also viewed as a requirement which all humans would find equally necessary, desirable and satisfying. It is not uncommon for Americans to say – and to believe – “if I don’t have at least half an hour a day all to myself, I would go stark raving mad!”

隐私，作为个人主义的终极产物，对于外国人来说可能更加难以理解。在很多非西方国家的语言中，甚至根本不存在“隐私”这个概念。即便存在，也很可能具有强烈的消极内涵，暗示着孤独或者被迫受到群体的孤立。在美国，隐私不仅仅具有积极意义，并且还被视作一种人类普遍认为必要的、令人渴望和满足的需求。美国人经常会说同时也非常相信一句话——“如果每天没有半小时的独处时间，我可能会疯掉！”

Individualism, as it exists in the United States, does mean that you will find a much greater variety of opinions (along with the absolute freedom to express those opinions anywhere and anytime) in this country. Yet, in spite of this wide range of personal opinion, almost all Americans will ultimately vote for one of the two major political parties in the next election. That is what is meant by the earlier statement that Americans take pride in claiming more individualism than, in fact, they actually have.

美国社会中盛行的个人主义价值观，意味着你会发现在这个国家充斥着各种各样的观点（与之相伴的是在任何时间任何地点表达这些观点

的绝对自由)。不过，尽管美国人的个人观点五花八门，但在美国总统大选时，在两个主要党派民主党和自由党之间，所有人都只是二选一而已。这也是为什么我之前提到过，虽然美国人很骄傲地宣称自己极具个人主义精神，但事实上并非总是如此。

6. Self-Help/Initiative

6.自助 / 行动力 (自力更生)

In the United States, a person can take credit, only for what he or she has accomplished by himself or herself without any outside assistance. Americans get no credit whatsoever for having been born into a rich family. (In the United States, that would be considered “an accident of birth.”) Americans pride themselves in having been poor and, through their own sacrifice and hard work, having climbed the difficult ladder of success to whatever level they have achieved - all by themselves. The American social system has, of course, made it possible for Americans to move, relatively easily, up the social ladder, whereas this is impossible to do in many countries.

在美国，一个人只有完全靠自己而不依赖其他外力获得成功，才能得到其他人的肯定。对于美国人来说，出生在显赫家庭并不算自己的能耐（这在美国被认为是“偶然事件”）。美国人最自豪的是，虽然出身穷苦，但通过自己的个人奋斗和努力工作，一路艰辛攀爬成功阶梯，最终全靠自己到达了现有的社会高度。当然，美国的社会制度也使得美国人能够相对轻松地实现阶层流动，相比之下，这在其它很多国家也许不太可能。

Take a look in an English-language dictionary at the composite words that have the word “self” as a prefix. In the average desk dictionary, there will be more than 100 such words, words like self-aware, self-confident, self-conscious, self-control, self-criticism, self-deception, self-defeating, self-denial, self-discipline, self-esteem, self-expressions, self-importance, self-improvement, self-interest, self-reliance, self-respect, self-restraint, self-sacrifice--the list goes on and on. The equivalent of these words cannot be found in most other languages. This is perhaps the best indication of how seriously Americans take doing things for one's self. The “self-made man or woman” is still very much the ideal in 20th century America.

在英语辞典中查询带有“自我”（self）前缀的合成词，从一本普通的案头辞典中你就能找到 100 多个类似的单词，比如自我意识、自信、自觉、自控、自我批评、自我欺骗、自掘坟墓、自我否定、自律、自尊、自我表达、自大、自我完善、自私自利、自力更生、自爱、自制、自我牺牲……这样的单子长得列不完。在其他很多语言中，不一定都能找到相似的词汇。这能在很大程度上体现出，美国人有多么在意自己做自己的事。在 20 世纪的美国，白手起家的成功人士仍然是理想的社会楷模。

7. Competition

7. 竞争（鼓励竞争）

Americans believe that competition brings out the best in any individual. They assert that it challenges or forces each person to produce the very best possible. Consequently, the foreign visitor will see competition being fostered in the American home and in the American classroom, even on the youngest age levels. Very young children, for instance, are encouraged to answer questions for which their classmates do not know the answers.

美国人认为竞争会激发出每个人的最佳表现。他们主张，竞争会给人带来挑战和压力，从而每个人发挥出最大的潜能。因此，外国访问者会在美国的家庭和学校中发现，美国人十分重视培养孩子的竞争意识，哪怕是年龄很小的儿童。例如，年幼的孩子会被鼓励去踊跃回答他的同学们不会的问题。

You may find the competitive value disagreeable, especially if you come from a society, which promotes cooperation rather than competition among individuals. But many U.S. Peace Corps volunteers teaching in Third World countries found the lack of competitiveness in a classroom situation equally distressing. They soon learned that what they had thought to be one of the universal human characteristics represented only a peculiarly American (or Western) value.

如果你来自一个鼓励人们之间协作而非竞争的社会，你或许不太赞同美国人的竞争观念。不过，不少美国和平队志愿者（U.S. Peace Corps）在第三世界国家当老师时，发现教室里缺乏竞争氛围的状况

也十分令人苦恼。他们这才发现，那些自己曾经认为是普遍的人类特质之一的东西，原来仅仅只是一种典型的美式（或者说是西方）价值观。

Americans, valuing competition, have devised an economic system to go with it – free enterprise. Americans feel very strongly that a high competitive economy will bring out the best in its people and ultimately, that the society which fosters competition will progress most rapidly. If you look for it, you will see evidence in all areas – in fields as diverse as medicine, the arts, education, and sports – that free enterprise is the approach most often preferred in America.

重视竞争的美国人，还设计出了一种与之配套的经济制度——自由市场。美国人强烈地认识到，一种高度竞争的经济制度将会激发人类最优秀的潜能，并最终推动鼓励这种竞争的社会快速进步。如果你仔细观察的话，几乎可以在美国社会各个领域发现证据——从医疗到艺术、教育和体育等各种领域——自由市场都是美国人最为青睐的经济形式。

8. Future Orientation

8. 着眼未来

Valuing the future, and the improvements Americans are sure the future will inevitably bring, means that they devalue the past and are, to a large extent, unconscious of the present. Even a happy present goes largely unnoticed because, happy as it may be, Americans have traditionally been hopeful that the future would bring even greater happiness. Almost all energy is directed toward realizing that better future. At best, the present condition is seen as preparatory to a later and greater event, which will eventually culminate in something even more worthwhile.

美国人着眼未来，他们确信明天必将更加美好。这意味着，他们并不看重过去，并且在很大程度上也不在意当下。即便现在过得很好，美国人也很容易选择忽视，因为他们一向寄希望于未来，期待以后的幸福来得更加猛烈。美国人的全部精力几乎都指向对美好未来的期待上。在美国人看来，现在是为更棒的未来做准备，而之后还会达到更值得期待的巅峰状态。

Since Americans have been taught to believe that Man, and not Fate, can and should be the one who controls the environment, this has made them

very good at planning and executing short-term projects. This ability, in turn, has caused Americans to be invited to all corners of the earth to plan and achieve the miracles that their goal-setting can produce.

既然美国人相信，人类可以并且应该控制环境，而非坐等命运的垂青，这让他们非常擅长规划并且执行短期项目。这种能力反过来也促使美国人被邀请到世界各地去规划和实现他们的“目标设定法”能够实现的伟大奇迹。

If you come from a culture where talking about or actively planning the future is felt to be a futile, perhaps even sinful, activity you will have not only philosophical with this very American characteristic but religious objections as well. Yet it is something you will have to learn to live with while you are here, for all around you Americans will be looking toward the future and what it will bring.

如果你所处的文化认为，谈论或者积极地计划未来是一件徒劳无用的行为，甚至可能是一种罪过。那么这种典型的美式价值观对你而言，不仅存在着哲学上的冲突，可能还是一种宗教上的异见。尽管如此，当你在美国生活时，你要学着适应这一点，因为你身边几乎所有美国人都会着眼未来以及未来会带来东西。

9. Action/Work Orientation

9.重视行动 / 工作 (注重实干)

“Don't just stand there,” goes a typical bit of American advice, “do something!” This expression is normally used in a crisis situation, yet, in a sense, it describes most Americans' entire waking life, where action – any action – is seen to be superior to inaction.

“别站在那儿，做点什么吧！”这是一句典型的美式箴言。这句话通常出现在紧急状况时，不过从某种程度上，这可以折射出大部分美国人的人生哲学，那就是行动——不管任何行动——都比什么都不做好。

Americans routinely plan and schedule an extremely active day. Any relaxation must be limited in time, pre-planned, and aimed at “recreating” (as in the word “recreation”) their ability to work harder and more

productively once the recreation is over. Americans believe leisure activities should assume a relatively small portion of one's total life. People think that it is "sinful" to "waste one's time," to sit around doing nothing or just to "daydream."

美国人习惯把每天都规划和安排的日程满满。任何休闲活动都必须限定时间，要事先计划好，其目标是为了“重新创造”（正如美式英语中“休闲”的字面意思）自己的能力，从而在休闲过后工作得更加努力和高效。美国人认为，休闲活动应当只占据一个人全部生活的极小一部分。他们认为，“虚度光阴”、坐在那里无所事事，或者只是“做白日梦”都十分具有“罪恶感”。

Such a "no nonsense" attitude toward life has created many people who have come to be known as "workaholics," or people who are addicted to their work, who think constantly about their jobs and who are frustrated if they are kept away from them, even during their evening hours and weekends. When such a person finally takes time away from work to go on vacation, even the vacation will be carefully planned, very busy and active.

美国人这种“紧张高效”的生活态度，令很多人成为所谓的“工作狂”，或者说对工作上瘾，他们不断思考自己的工作，离开工作岗位就会浑身不自在，哪怕只是在晚上下班时间和周末。当他们终于有时间放下工作出去度假时，甚至假期也要经过谨慎的规划，务必保持相当地忙碌和活跃。

The workaholic syndrome, in turn, causes Americans to identify themselves wholly with their professions. The first question an American will generally ask another American when meeting them for the first time is related to his or her work: "What do you do?" "Where do you work?" or "Who (what company) are you with?"

这种“工作狂综合症”，反过来也导致美国人把职业作为一种身份认同。当两个美国人初次见面时，他们打招呼的第一个问题往往跟工作相关：“你是做什么的？”“你在哪里工作？”或者是“你为谁（哪家公司）工作？”

America may be one of the few countries in the world where it seems reasonable to speak about the "dignity of human labor," meaning by that, hard, physical labor. In America, even presidents of corporations will

engage in physical labor from time to time and in doing so, gain, rather than lose, respect from others for such action.

美国可能是这个世界上少有的几个国家中把谈论“人类劳动的高贵性”视作理所应当，此处的“人类劳动”，指的是艰苦的体力劳动。在美国，哪怕企业总裁都要时不时地参与体力劳动，这种行为不仅不会让其他人小看，反而会获得更多尊重。

10. Informality

10. 不拘礼节

If you come from a more formal society, you will likely find Americans to be extremely informal and, you will probably feel, they are even disrespectful of those in authority. Americans are one of the most informal and casual people in the world, even when compared to their close relative – the Western European.

如果你来自一个比较崇尚礼节的社会，你可能会发现美国人相当随意，并且你还会感觉到，他们甚至不是特别尊重权威。美国人可以说是这个世界上最不拘礼节、最随和的人群，哪怕跟他们最相近的亲属西欧人比起来也是如此。

As one example of this informality, American bosses often urge their employees to call them by their first names and even feel uncomfortable if they are called “Mr.” or “Mrs.”

美国人的不拘礼节体现在方方面面，例如，美国公司的老板时常敦促员工对自己直呼其名，如果员工坚持在其名字前面加上“先生”或者“女士”时，甚至还会让他们感觉很不舒服。

Dress is another area where American informality will be most noticeable, perhaps even shocking. One can go to a symphony performance, for example, in any large American city nowadays and find some people in the audience dressed in blue jeans and short-sleeved shirts.

从衣着打扮上也可以明显看出美国人的不讲究，这一点甚至可能到了令人吃惊的地步。例如，在如今美国任何一个大城市的交响音乐会现场，你会发现观众席上的还有人穿着家常的蓝色牛仔裤和短袖T恤衫。

Informality is also apparent in Americans' greetings. The more formal "How are you?" has largely been replaced with an informal "Hi." This is as likely to be used to one's superior as to one's best friend.

美国人在打招呼中时不拘礼节也很明显。较为正式的“你好吗？”已经在很大程度上被一句简单的“嗨”取代。而这样的打招呼方式既可以对自己的亲近密友，也可以对自己的顶头上司。

If you are a highly placed official in your own country, you will probably, at first, find such informality to be very unsettling, even disrespectful. Americans, on the other hand, would consider such informality as a compliment! Certainly it is not intended as a personal insult, and you should not take it as such.

如果你在自己的国家是一位高级官员，一开始你很可能会感觉美国人的不拘小节会令人感到不安，甚至不够尊重人。但是，美国人却把这种不拘礼节当做是一种恭维。可以确定的是，这绝没有侮辱人的意思，你也用不着往心里去。

11. Directness/Openness/Honesty

11. 直接 / 公开 / 诚实 (开诚布公)

Many other countries have developed subtle, sometimes highly ritualistic, ways of informing other people of unpleasant information. Americans, however, have always preferred the most direct approach possible. They are likely to be completely honest in delivering their negative evaluations, and to do so publicly. If you come from a society that uses the indirect manner of conveying bad news or uncomplimentary evaluations, you will be shocked at American bluntness.

不少社会都已经发展出了一套微妙、有时候甚至是高度仪式化的方式来传递令人不悦的信息。不过，美国人却一直偏好直截了当的表达方式。他们倾向于直言不讳地表达负面评价，并且往往是公开表达。如果你所在的社会一般采用间接方式传递坏消息或者负面评价，你可能会被美国人的坦率震惊。

If you come from a country where saving face is important, be assured that Americans are not trying to make you lose face with their directness. It is important to realize that an American would not, in such cases, lose face.

The burden of adjustment, in all such cases while you are in this country, will be on you. There is no way to soften the blow of such directness and openness if you are not used to it, except to inform you that the rules have changed while you are here. Indeed, many Americans urge their fellow countrymen to become even more open and direct, and to take “assertiveness” training courses if need be.

如果你来自一个“爱面子”的国家，你要相信一点，美国人并非试图通过直接表达让你丢面子。重要的是你要意识到，美国人并不觉得这种情况会让人丢面子。当你在美国生活时遇到这种情况，需要调整心态的压力将由自己来承担。如果你无法适应，也很难找到方法缓和这种直接和公开带来的打击，除非告诉你，这里是美国，你以前习惯的规则已经改变了。事实上，很多美国人还督促国人要更加公开和直接，并且在必要情况下接受“自信心”训练。

Americans consider anything other than the most direct and open approach to be “dishonest” and “insincere” and will quickly lose confidence in and distrust anyone who hints at what is intended rather than saying it outright. Anyone who, in the United States, chooses to use an intermediary to deliver the message will also be considered “manipulative” and “untrustworthy.”

美国人习惯最直接和公开的表达方式，如果不这样做的话会被他们视为“不诚实”和“不真诚”，并且迅速对其失去信心，他们也不相信任何说话拐弯抹角兜圈子的人。在美国，如果有人选择利用中间人传话，也会被视作“操纵别人”和“不可信任”。

12. Practicality/Efficiency

12. 实用主义 / 效果 (实用主义)

Americans have a reputation for being an extremely realistic, practical and efficient people. The practical consideration is likely to be given highest priority in making any important decision in the United States. Americans pride themselves in not being very philosophically or theoretically oriented. If Americans would even admit to having a philosophy, it would probably be that of pragmatism.

美国人超级讲求实用、注重实际和效果的声名已经广为人知。他们在做任何重要决定时，出于实际的考量会被放在首要位置。美国人很骄傲自己不为哲学和理论观点左右，如果非让他们承认一种哲学理念，那也很可能是实用主义。

Will it make any money? Will it “pay its own way”? What can I gain from this activity? These are the kinds of questions that Americans are likely to ask in their practical pursuit, and not such questions as: Is it aesthetically pleasing? Will it be enjoyable? or Will it advance the cause of knowledge?

做这事这能赚钱吗？能不能捞回本钱？我能从这次活动中得到什么？美国人在实际行动中可能会提出这些问题，他们却很少提出诸如此类问题：这件东西令人愉悦吗？这个活动有趣吗？或者说这能够丰富我的知识吗？

This practical, pragmatic orientation has caused Americans to contribute more inventions to the world than any other country in human history. The love of “practicality” has also caused Americans to view some professions more favorably than others. Management and economics, for example, are much more popular in the United States than philosophy or anthropology, and law and medicine are valued more than the arts.

这种讲求效果和实用性的价值观使得美国人在人类历史上创造的发明物比其他任何国家的人都多。对于“实用主义”的热爱也导致美国人更加偏好一些职业。比如，在美国大学中，管理学和经济学比起哲学和人类学受欢迎的多，而法律和医学比艺术更吃香。

Another way in which this favoring of the practical makes itself felt in the United States is a belittling of “emotional” and “subjective” evaluations in favor of “rational” and “objective” assessments. Americans try to avoid being “too sentimental” in making their decisions. They judge every situation “on its own merits.” The popular American “trial-and-error” approach to problem solving also reflects the practical approach. This problem-solving approach, actually invented in the United States, suggests listing several possible solutions to any given problem, then trying them out, one-by-one to see which would be most effective.

美国人讲求实际的价值观，也让他们比较轻视“情感化”和“主观化”的评价，更重视“理性”和“客观”的分析。美国人在做决策时尽量避免“

太过感情用事”，他们往往按照事物本身的好坏进行评判。美国人在解决问题时喜欢运用“试错法”，这也反映了他们的实用主义价值观。“试错法”实际上就是美国人发明的问题解决方案，该方案主张，针对任何一种既定问题，可以列出一系列可能的解决方案，然后一个个试着来，看哪种解决方案最有效。

13. Materialism/Acquisitiveness

13. 物质主义 / 占有欲 (物质至上)

Foreigners generally consider Americans much more materialistic than Americans are likely to consider themselves. Americans would like to think that their material objects are just the “natural benefits” which always result from hard work and serious intent – a reward, they think, which all people could enjoy were they as industrious and hard-working as Americans.

外国人都觉得美国人物质至上，但美国人自己并不这么看。美国人更愿意把自己拥有的物质看作是“自然的馈赠”，因为这些物质往往是自己努力工作和正当需求的产物——美国人将物质视作一种奖励，他们认为，如果每个人都像美国人那样勤勉努力，也一定能够享受到同样的物质待遇。

But, by any standard, Americans are materialistic. This means that they value and collect more material objects than most of the world’s people would ever dream possible to own. It also means they give a higher priority to obtaining, maintaining and protecting their material objects than they do in developing and enjoying interpersonal relationships with people.

尽管如此，不管用哪一种标准来衡量，美国人都可以称得上物质主义。这意味着，美国人重视和收集各种物质，其数量超过世界上其他任何国家的人梦想中拥有的东西。这还意味着，相比发展和享受人际关系的乐趣，美国人把占有、维持和保护自己的物质财富放在首要地位。

Since Americans value newness and innovation, they sell or throw away their possessions frequently and replace them with newer ones. A car may

be kept for only two or three years, a house for five or six before trading it in for another one.

由于美国人很重视新奇和创意，因此相当频繁地出售或者丢弃自己拥有的东西，替代以更新的东西。对美国人来说，通常一辆汽车只会开两到三年，房子住上五六年就会换成新的。

Application

备注

Before leaving this discussion of the values Americans live by, consider how knowledge of these values explains things about Americans.

在合上这本关于美国人基本价值观的小册子之前，请考虑一下这些价值观如何解释美国人的行为。

One can, for example, see America's impressive record of scientific and technological achievement as a natural result of several of these 13 values:

例如，你可以把美国人取得的非凡科技成就看作是在这 13 条价值观中的一部分作用下取得的结果：

First of all, it was necessary to believe (value #1) these things could be achieved, that Man does not have to simply sit and wait for Fate to bestow them or not bestow them, and that Man does have control over his own environment (and his own destiny) if he is willing to take it. Other values which have contributed to this record of achievement include (#2) an expectation of positive results to come from change (and the acceptance of an ever-faster rate of change as “normal”); (#3) the necessity to schedule and plan one's time; (#6) the self-help concept; (#7) competition; (#8) future orientation; (#9) action/work orientation; (#12) practicality; and (#13) materialism.

首先，根据第 1 条价值观，必须要相信这些成就能够实现，也就是说人类不应该只是坐等命运之神垂青，或者说乖乖接受命运的安排，只要人类愿意，就能够掌控周遭的环境和自己的命运。其他造就美国科学技术成果的价值观还包括第 2 条：热爱改变，认为改变会带来积极结果（以及能够接受把快速的变化看作“理所应当”）；第 3 条价值观：惜时如金；第 6 条价值观：自力更生；第 7 条价值观：鼓励竞争；第

8 条价值观：着眼未来；第 9 条价值观：注重实干；第 12 条价值观：实用主义；第 13 条价值观：物质至上。

Another example was given by a recent Egyptian visitor who shared his amazement at a scene he witnessed while visiting the gift shop at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. He saw a young American mother bending down to talk to and to reason with what he guessed to be her four-year-old son. He overheard her saying to the boy, “Tommy, if you buy that model airplane with your money now, then a bit later, when your sister wants to stop and have a Coke, you are not going to have enough money left to buy one.” He was amazed because he said, “In my country, the mother would never have said a thing like that. In the first place, she would not have given the little boy “his own money” to manage. Instead, she would have managed the money, and when he wanted the model airplane, she would have bought it for him. Then later, when he wanted a Coke, she would have bought that for him, too.”

另外还有一个例子是，最近一位埃及访问者分享了自己在参观位于华盛顿特区的美国航空博物馆的礼品店遇到的难忘一幕。这位访问者看到一位年轻的美国母亲弯腰跟貌似她 4 岁的儿子讲道理，他无意中听到两人的对话，母亲说：“汤米，如果你现在花自己的钱买那架模型飞机，一会儿你姐姐想停下来买可乐喝的时候，你可就没钱买可乐啦。”这位访客感觉很吃惊，他说：“因为在我自己的国家，母亲绝对不会那样跟孩子说话。首先，母亲不会让这么小的孩子管理‘自己的钱’。相反，母亲自己会保管钱，如果孩子想要模型飞机，他就给孩子买一架。过一会儿，如果孩子想要喝可乐，她还会再给孩子买可乐。”

He could see, having just read “The Values Americans Live By,” that in America it is very important for this young mother to teach her son to be independent and to learn, as early as possible, to manage his own money. He could also see that at least six of the 13 values on our list were involved in what he had just witnessed: (#1) personal control over the environment/responsibility; (#5) individualism/independence; (#6) self-help; (#8) future orientation; (#12) practicality; and (#13) materialism.

如果这位埃及访问者阅读过“美国人的 13 条基本价值观”这本小册子，就不难理解，对这位年轻的美国母亲来说，培养孩子的独立性非常重要，并且还要尽早让孩子学会管理自己的财务。这位访问者可能还会

发现，他目睹的这一幕中至少包含我们列出的 13 条美式价值观中的 6 条：第 1 条，对于环境和责任的个人控制；第 5 条，个人主义；第 6 条，自力更生；第 8 条，着眼未来；第 12 条，实用主义；以及第 13 条，物质主义。

You can do the same sort of exercise as you consider other aspects of American society and analyze them to see which of the 13 values described in this paper apply. By using this approach, you will soon begin to understand Americans and their actions – and even to predict what those actions will be. As you come to understand Americans, they will seem less “strange” than they did at first, when you were judging them using the value system of your own country.

在你考虑美国社会的其他方面时，也可以利用上面这种方式练习分析，看其反映出我们列出的 13 条价值观中的哪几条。通过这种方法，你将很快能够理解美国人以及他们的行为——甚至还能预测他们的行为。当你学会理解美国人，不再用自己国家的价值体系评价美国人时，他们就没有一开始显得那么“奇怪”了。

(*Excerpted from original)

(* 摘录自原文)